THE

ARGUMENTS

OF THE

BOOKS and CHAPTERS

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT,

With Practical OBSERVATIONS.

Written Originally in *French*,

By the Reverend Mr *OSTERVALD*,

Professor of Divinity, and one of the Ministers of the Church at *Neufchatel* in *Switzerland*: And by him presented to the SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

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M.DCC.LXIV.

TO HER

ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE

PRINCESS

ANNE, &c.

MADAM,

THE treatiſe which I preſume to lay at the feet of your Royal Highneſs, conſiſts of an enumeration of the Arguments of the books and

 chapters

chapters in the New Teſtament, accompanied with theological and moral Reflections upon all of them. It was compiled by that eminent Divine Mr *Oſtervald*, at the requeſt of a SOCIETY, that has diſtinguiſhed itſelf by the moſt worthy of all purpoſes, the endeavour of PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE. The work could hardly have a greater recommendation than that of ſuch an aſſembly; but I can name a ſtill higher advantage to it, the approbation of your illuſtrious Mother.

THAT it may be uſeful to your Highneſs and your Siſters, by forwarding you in the imitation of her Chriſtian

and

and Royal virtues and accompliſhments, is the moſt ſincere and conſtant prayer of,

MADAM,

Your Royal Highneſs's

Moſt Humble, and

Moſt Obedient Servant,

John Chamberlayne.

THE GOSPEL According to St MATTHEW.

ARGUMENT.

We have in the Gospels the history of our Lord's life, death, and resurrection, and his ascension into heaven. It is the duty of every Christian to read and hear these divine books with serious attention and profound reverence; to meditate on them day and night; and to make a right use of the instructions contained in them. — The first of the Four Gospels, which is that of the apostle St Matthew, *is thought to have been written about eight years after our Lord's ascension.*

CHAP. I.

THIS chapter contains, I. The genealogy of *Jesus Christ*, from *Abraham* to *Joseph*, the husband of the blessed virgin. II. A short relation of the conception and birth of our Lord.

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

THE genealogy of *Jesus Christ*, which is recited in the first chapter of St *Matthew*, shews that he is descended from the patriarch *Abraham*, and from king *David*, as was foretold by the prophets. And the history of his conception and birth teaches us, that he was born of the virgin *Mary* after a wonderful manner, by the operation of the holy Ghost, according to the prediction of the prophet *Isaiah*. Both our Lord's genealogy, and the manner of his conception and birth, prove him to be the Messiah whom God had promised to send; and that in him the promises of God, and the propecies of the old testament, had their accomplishment: This engages us to receive him as our Saviour, to submit to his doctrine, and to render thanks to God for giving us his only Son for our redeemer, *who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh*, Rom. i. 3 and *who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.* Rom. ix. 5.

CHAP. II.

THIS chapter contains four things: I. The arrival of the Magi that came to worship *Jesus* after his birth. These Magi were men of great learning and high rank, who came from *Arabia*, or some other country lying to the east of *Judea*. II. The retreat of *Joseph* and *Mary*, who fled into *Egypt* with the child *Jesus*, to avoid the rage of *Herod*. III. The slaughter of the children of *Bethlehem*, whom *Herod* caused to be murdered, thinking to destroy our Lord among them. IV. The return of *Joseph* and *Mary* to *Judea*, after the death of *Herod*.

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS.

THeſe are the obſervations that may be made upon this chapter: I. The firſt is, that the wiſe men came to worſhip *Jeſus* after his birth, being guided by a miraculous ſtar, which God cauſed to appear; to which, no doubt, was added ſome kind of revelation from heaven: God was pleaſed thereby to render that birth illuſtrious, and to ſhew the dignity of the perſon of our Lord; and inform the *Jews* that the Meſſiah, whom they expected, was going to make his appearance; and it likewiſe denoted, that the Gentiles would ſoon be admitted into covenant with God. II. *Herod's* conſulting the chief prieſts and ſcribes, and the anſwer they made, prove that the Meſſiah was expected at that time; and that *Bethlehem*, it was thought, would be the place of his birth. III. The homage which theſe wiſe men of the eaſt paid to the child *Jeſus*, falling down before him, and preſenting unto him their gifts, ſhould excite us, who know he is our God and our Saviour, to worſhip him, love and praiſe him, and to devote to him all that is in our power. IV. We ſee in the behaviour of *Herod* towards the wiſe men, and in the maſſacre which he made of the children of *Bethlehem*, the craft and cruelty of that prince, who neglected no poſſible means to deſtroy the child *Jeſus*: And thus was our Lord expoſed, even from his birth, to great perils; which ſhewed, from the very firſt, that his *kingdom was not of this world*, and that he was born to ſuffer. We may likewiſe take notice, that God, by the warning which he gave to the wiſe men, and afterwards to *Joſeph*, defeated *Herod's* deſigns, and that all the meaſures which that unjuſt and cruel prince had taken to deſtroy *Jeſus*, as effectual as he thought them, and as they appeared to be, could not procure our Lord's

death, nor prevent his returning into *Judea*, where he afterwards exercised his ministry. All these events may convince us, that providence did direct, in a particular manner, all that happened to *Jesus Christ*; and that the utmost endeavours of men can never hinder the execution of what God has purposed, nor hurt those whom he protects.

CHAP. III.

THIS chapter consists of two parts: I. In the first, mention is made of the preaching and ministry of *John* the Baptist; and, II. In the second, the evangelist relates the history of the baptism of our Lord.

REFLECTIONS.

LET us observe in general upon the first part of this chapter, that before the appearance of *Jesus Christ*, *John* the Baptist, as the prophets had foretold, was sent from God to declare to the *Jews* the coming of the Messiah, and to exhort them to repentance; by which God was pleased to teach them, that the time for the manifestation of the Messiah's kingdom was come; but that it would be a spiritual and heavenly, not a temporal or worldly kingdom, as they imagined. With the same view, *John* the Baptist assured the *Jews*, that their descending from the patriarch *Abraham* was a privilege which would by no means secure them from the divine vengeance, that was ready to fall upon that nation because of their unbelief; and that God would call other nations in their stead, to become, by faith, children of *Abraham*. In short, he gave them to understand, that *Jesus* was going to appear, and that it was he who should execute the judgments of God upon the impenitent and unbelieving, and gloriously reward the righteous. Thus God in his wisdom was willing to prepare the *Jews*

Jews for receiving *Jesus Christ*, and remove those prejudices concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, which might have hindered their believing in him. From the preaching of *John* the Baptist we may learn, that repentance and holiness of life, is a qualification without which no one can be the disciple of *Jesus Christ*, nor enter into the kingdom of God. It likewise informs us, that as the unbelieving *Jews* vainly boasted that they were the children of *Abraham*, it is no advantage to hypocrites to be externally in covenant with God; that *Jesus Christ* knows them, and that he will one Day cleanse his church, by casting the wicked into everlasting fire, and by receiving the true believers into his kingdom. As to the baptism of our Lord, it must be observed, that when he was entering upon the discharge of his office, he was baptised by St *John* his forerunner; that upon this occasion the holy Ghost descended upon him in a visible manner, and that God caused a voice to be heard from heaven, whereby he declared that *Jesus* was his beloved Son. God was pleased that all these things should happen, to convince *John* the Baptist, and all the people, that *Jesus* was the promised Messiah. Thus the history of his baptism obliges us to consider him as the Son of God, and to pay him unreserved obedience. It likewise engages us to reverence the baptism we have received, and by which we have been dedicated to God, made his children, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

CHAP. IV.

ST *Matthew* here relates, I. The history of the temptation of *Jesus Christ*. II. The manner in which he began to exercise his ministry in *Galilee*, by declaring that the kingdom of God was come, by choosing apostles, and by working miracles.

REFLECTIONS.

IT may be obſerved in general upon the hiſtory of the temptation, that the deſign of the devil in tempting our Lord, was to try whether *Jeſus* was the Son of God; and that it pleaſed God to ſuffer this temptation, that the devil, convinced of that truth, might reverence the power of *Jeſus Chriſt*; and that it might appear, that our Lord was come into the world to deſtroy the kingdom of Satan. Let it alſo be conſidered, that if *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf was tempted, we ſhould not be ſurpriſed, if we alſo are expoſed to various temptations; and that we ought, in imitation of our Lord, to reſiſt temptations, and particularly ſuch as might lead us into diſtruſt, or preſumption, or make us grow fond of the honours or riches of this world; or laſtly, ſuch as may any way tend to draw us off from the true ſervice of God, and from that allegiance we owe him. And the method which Chriſt made uſe of to repel the temptations of Satan, by quoting the holy ſcriptures, ſhews us, that it is by the word of God that we may defeat temptations, and quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Three things are to be obſerved in the latter part of this chapter: firſt, that *Jeſus Chriſt* began to exerciſe his miniſtry in *Galilee*, by preaching repentance, as *John* Baptiſt had done. This ſhould convince us more and more, that holineſs of life is the great end of the goſpel which Chriſt preached, and what he principally requires of his diſciples. II. Our Lord's making choice of fiſhermen for his apoſtles, proves, that the wonderful ſucceſs of their preaching afterwards, did not proceed from themſelves, but ought wholly to be aſcribed to God, who endowed them with his gifts. Laſtly, The wonderful cures by which *Jeſus* made himſelf known at firſt, tended to ſhew, that he was

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sent from God, that his doctrine was from above, and that he came into the world only for the good and salvation of mankind.

CHAP. V. 1——20.

THIS chapter, together with the two following, contains Christ's sermon upon the mount. In the beginning of this sermon, our Lord does two things: I. He teaches us what those dispositions are without which we cannot be truly happy. II. What obligation his disciples are under to live a strictly holy life.

REFLECTIONS.

OUR Lord's design in this discourse, contained in the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of St *Matthew*, in general is, to instruct his disciples in the chief duties of the Christian life; for which reason, we ought to read and hear it with great attention, and to regulate our behaviour by the divine precepts we find in it. Two things are to be considered in the first part of this chapter: I. The beatitudes teach us wherein the true happiness of man consists, and how to distinguish the true disciples of Christ, whose character it is not to set their hearts upon the riches, pleasures or honours of this world, but to be unconcerned about earthly things; to live in meekness, humility, holiness and peace; to desire ardently and above all things to be holy and to please God, and even joyfully to undergo persecution for the sake of the gospel. II. *Jesus Christ* has taught us, that his disciples are the salt of the earth and the light of the world; that is, that they ought to distinguish themselves from other men by the purity of their lives, and endeavour to enlighten and edify them by their instructions and good examples. He has expressly

declared,

declared, that he was ſo far from coming into the world to diſpenſe with the obſervation of the law of God, that on the contrary, he came to lay men under ſtill greater obligations to fulfil it in the moſt perfect manner. Laſtly, He declares he will not admit into his kingdom, any who had not attained to a greater perfection in righteouſneſs and holineſs than that of the ſcribes and Phariſees, who were eſteemed among the Jews men of the greateſt knowledge and holineſs. All theſe precepts of our Lord ſhould make us ſenſible of the indiſpenſible obligation we lie under to ſtudy to lead a holy life, and to aſpire after the higheſt degree of perfection we can poſſibly attain.

CHAP. V. 21—48.

JESUS CHRIST, to ſhew that his diſciples are called to great holineſs, teaches them, that it is not ſufficient to abſtain from notorious crimes, and ſuch as are expreſsly condemned in the law of God; but alſo, that thoſe ſins which appear leſs conſiderable are to be avoided, and above all, the motions of the heart to be regulated. He inſtances in the commandments concerning murder, adultery, oaths, revenge, and the love of our neighbours. He corrects the falſe interpretations which the Jews put upon thoſe commandments, and gives us the true ſenſe and meaning of them.

Reflections.

THE explanation which our Lord gives of the chief commandments of the law, teaches us, that God prohibits and puniſhes not only the great and crying ſins mentioned in the decalogue, but that he likewiſe condemns and puniſhes us for evil thoughts and evil deſires, which the Jewiſh doctors conſidered only as light faults: beſides this general and very important

portant leſſon, Chriſt inſtructs us in theſe four particular duties: I. That anger, and all terms of reproach and contempt, which proceed from hatred of our neighbour, ſubject us to condemnation, as well as murder; that, far from hating any one, we ought to labour to have peace with all men; and that we ſhould not preſent ourſelves before God, and offer him our prayers, without doing all that lies in our power to be reconciled to thoſe that have any thing againſt us. II. The ſecond duty relates to purity and chaſtity: Our Lord teaches us, that impure deſires render us guilty before God, as well as adultery and other acts of uncleanneſs; that in order to be chaſte, we muſt watch over ourſelves, mortify our ſenſes, pluck out an eye, cut off a hand or foot; that is, mortify ourſelves and renounce every thing, though moſt dear and agreeable to us, if it be an occaſion of falling. He likewiſe teaches us, that the marriage engagement cannot be diſſolved but by adultery, which ſhews what obligation Chriſtians are under to chaſtity. III. The third inſtruction relates to ſwearing: The doctrine of the Son of God upon this point is, that it is not ſufficient to avoid perjury, which is a very great crime; but that we ought likewiſe to be ſcrupulous in breaking oaths, though not made by the name of God, and entirely to abſtain from vain and raſh oaths, of what kind ſoever they be, ſince they are forbid by the law of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and contrary to that reverence that is due to the divinity. IV. The fourth duty is that of charity, and the love of our neighbour: What Chriſt commands upon that head is, to abſtain from revenge, to bear injuries rather than to return evil for evil; to give up our right for peace ſake, and to avoid diſputes; to love all men, even thoſe that hate us, therein imitating our heavenly Father, who does good to all, even to the wicked and ungrateful: this is the law of the goſpel, and of true charity, and in the

the practice of all these duties, we shall find our perfection and glory.

CHAP. VI.

OUR Lord instructs his disciples in the duties of alms, prayer and fasting; shews them how to discharge those religious acts, and exhorts them above all to avoid hypocrisy and ostentation. II. He forbids them to take pains to heap up worldly riches, or to be solicitous for the good things of this life; exhorts them to depend upon providence, and before all things to seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.

Reflections.

IN this chapter the Saviour of the world teaches us, I. That alms, prayer and fasting, are three very important duties of religion; and as to fasting, in particular, it evidently appears, that since Christ has prescribed rules for the manner of fasting, as well as for prayer and alms, his design was, that his disciples should fast; private fasts, which are here meant, being very useful to mortify the flesh, and to dispose us for humiliation and prayer; and having been likewise practised by the apostles, and since their time by Christians in general throughout the world. II. Our Saviour commands us carefully to avoid hypocrisy and vainglory in giving alms, in prayer, and fasting; and to discharge these duties with sincerity and humility, remembering that we are in the presence of God, to whom all the secrets of our hearts are exposed; and that hypocrites have no reward to expect from him. III. Since the Lord's Prayer was composed by Jesus Christ himself, and comprehends all that is necessary for the glory of God and our own happiness, the use we are to make of it is, To offer

it up to God with the greateſt reverence, fervency and devotion: and in the ſecond place, to adapt, not only our prayers, but likewiſe our thoughts and behaviour, to that excellent pattern which Chriſt has left us. IV. Our Lord has declared moſt expreſsly, that we muſt not expect God ſhould hear and pardon us, if we do not likewiſe pardon all thoſe that have offended us; we ought therefore to examine ourſelves very ſtrictly on this head, before we offer up our prayers to God. V. The fifth leſſon which we learn from this chapter is, not eagerly to purſue the treaſures of this world, which are vain and uncertain, and which many accidents may deprive us of; but rather to labour after the heavenly treaſure, which is in its own nature moſt excellent, and which nothing can take from us. To this end he repreſents the danger of loving riches, becauſe ſuch love blinds us, and engages our affections to the earth, and makes it impoſſible to lift up our hearts to God, to love and ſerve him, whilſt the love of this world has poſſeſſion of our hearts. VI. Our Lord does not only forbid us to love riches, but even commands us not to be uneaſy, or too ſolicitous even for the neceſſaries of life, exhorting us to truſt in the providence of God, who, as he takes care for birds and other creatures, will much more provide for the wants of his own children, who are of a more excellent nature, and deſigned for immortality.

Our Saviour condemns thoſe worldly cares which are exceſſive, and attended with uneaſineſs and diſtruſt, becauſe ſuch cares are unprofitable, and unworthy of chriſtians. Laſtly, He exhorts us to endeavour above all things to pleaſe God, and to attain the kingdom of heaven; promiſing us, that if we do ſo, God will grant us all things neceſſary for the ſupport of the body. Let us imprint in our minds theſe divine leſſons; let them always be preſent to

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us in the midſt of our worldly concerns, to ſecure us from too ſtrict a union with them, and engage us chiefly to ſeek after that never-failing treaſure which is reſerved in heaven for us.

CHAP. VII.

OUR Lord diſcourſes here of raſh judgment; of prudence in propoſing truth; of prayer and its efficacy; he preſcribes rules of juſtice and charity; exhorts us to enter in at the ſtrait gate, and to avoid falſe teachers. He declares, that all who call him Lord will not enter into the kingdom of heaven; and ſhews by a parable, that it is in vain to hear his word, if we do not practiſe it.

Reflections.

THIS chapter contains ſeveral weighty inſtructions. I. The firſt is, not to judge raſhly of our neighbour, nor to blame him with too great ſeverity; to acknowledge our own faults, and amend them, rather than pry too curiouſly into, and reprove the faults of other men. II. The ſecond is, not to give that which is holy unto dogs; this is a prudential advice, the meaning of which is, That when we have to do with carnal and profane men, who proudly and contemptuouſly reject the doctrine of the goſpel, we ought not to offer it to them, for fear of expoſing religion to their hatred and contempt. III. Our Lord exhorts us to pray to God with confidence, aſſuring us, that prayer is of very great efficacy, provided it be attended with zeal and perſeverance, and that we aſk of God thoſe things that are really good; this he ſhews by the compariſon between God and our natural parents, who never deny their children the things that are neceſſary for them. IV. He gives us here a rule of juſtice and charity, which is, to

to do to others as we would have them do to us; this most perfect, and at the same time most plain and easy rule, we ought always to have before our eyes. V. He exhorts his disciples to enter in at the strait gate, that is, to follow that faith and piety which leads to salvation, though few people walk in that way, and it be contrary to human passions and inclinations, and even though it should sometimes expose us to persecution; and he commands us to avoid the paths of error and vice, which seem agreeable to flesh and blood; a way in which many people walk, but which leads to destruction. VI. Our Lord bids his disciples beware of impostors and false teachers, which would be very numerous afterwards. The rule he gives is, to judge of them by their fruits; that is, by their works and behaviour, and by the natural effects of their doctrine, taking notice whether it tended to the glory of God, and to make mankind better. VII. After that he declares, that all who profess his religion, and call him their Lord, shall not enter into heaven; that he will receive into it none but such as perform his will; and that many who have known him, and have even wrought miracles in his name, shall be shut out of his kingdom, because they have not kept his commandments. VIII. Lastly, He concludes this discourse by the comparison of a house founded upon a rock, with one built upon the sand; by which he shews, that it is in vain to hear his word, if we do not observe that which he commands; and that those who fail in this essential duty, can never persevere, nor resist temptation. By this similitude we are taught what use to make of the gospel, and particularly of the instructions contained in this and the two foregoing chapters.

CHAP. VIII. 1——17.

ST *Matthew* relates ſeveral miracles of *Jeſus Chriſt*. I. The healing of a leper. II. That of the ſervant of a Gentile captain. III. That of St *Peter's* mother in law, and ſeveral other diſeaſed people.

Reflections.

AS this chapter begins the hiſtory of our Saviour's miracles, the firſt obſervation we ſhall make relates to thoſe miracles in general; in which we diſcover, I. The infinite power of our Lord, which appeared in his healing all kinds of diſeaſes, by his word only. II. His goodneſs and love towards men, thoſe miracles being nothing elſe but acts of beneficence. III. We are to conſider the deſign of theſe miracles, which was to convince men that *Jeſus* was ſent from God, and to engage them to hear him, and believe in him; for which reaſon the miracles he wrought were commonly for the ſake of ſuch as believed he was able to do them. Beſides theſe general reflections, which ought always to be remembered when we read the goſpel, it is to be obſerved, that in the cure of the leper, our Lord had reſpect to his faith and prayer; whereby we may ſee, that he ſaves and delivers thoſe who have recourſe to him with an humble confidence. Farther, *Jeſus Chriſt* ordered the leper to go and ſhew himſelf to the high prieſt, and offer what was commanded by the law, to convince the *Jews* that he was quite cured, and that they might not accuſe him of being an enemy to the law of *Moſes*. The hiſtory of the centurion, who entreated our Lord to heal his ſervant, is particularly remarkable, for the profound humility and ſurpriſing faith of that man, who did not think himſelf worthy to receive Chriſt into his houſe; and was perſuaded, that

that without coming to him, our Lord needed only to say the word, and the servant would be healed; with as much eafe as he, being an officer, could command the foldiers under him to obey him. Our Lord's great commendation of the faith of that officer, (who was born a heathen) faying, that he had not found fuch great faith even among the *Jews*, obliges us to take great notice of that example, and to imitate the faith and humility of the centurion. *Jefus* foretold, upon this occafion, that many fhould come from the eaft, and from the weft, and fit down in the kingdom of heaven, when the children of the kingdom fhould be caft out; which was as much as to fay, That the Gentiles, from the feveral parts of the world, fhould be admitted into covenant with God, and the *Jews* rejected; as was foon after verified by the event. Laftly, St *Matthew*'s applying that prophecy of *Ifaiah*, *He has borne our griefs and carried our forrows*, to our Lord, after his healing St *Peter*'s mother in law and feveral others, teaches us what was the end of all thefe miracles; they were defigned to prove that *Jefus* was a kind and compaffionate Saviour, and that he only came into the world to do good to mankind; to deliver them from all their miferies, and chiefly from their fins.

CHAP. VIII. 18——34.

THE latter part of this chapter contains three things. I. Our Saviour's reply to one of the fcribes, and to a difciple that defired to follow him. II. The ftilling a tempeft. III. The cure of two men poffeffed with devils.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THE anfwer which *Jefus Chrift* returned to a fcribe that was defirous to follow him, tended to make him fenfible, that he was not to expect

worldly

worldly advantages in his ſervice; and his bidding one of his diſciples *leave the dead to bury their dead*, ſignified, that he ought to leave the care of temporal things to thoſe that were not enlightened with the goſpel, and that thoſe whom he called to be his diſciples ſhould follow him without delay, and be ready to forſake every thing, and to renounce the things of this life, even ſuch as are lawful and innocent, when they hinder them from diſcharging the duties of their calling. II. In our Saviour's miracle of laying the ſtorm, we may obſerve, on one hand, his power in calming the wind and the ſea by his word only; and on the other, the weakneſs of the apoſtles, who were afraid of ſinking. This event, which tended to confirm their faith, ought to ſtrengthen ours, and fill us with an entire confidence in the power and goodneſs of *Jeſus Chriſt*. We may be entirely ſecure, even in the midſt of the greateſt dangers, when we are beloved by him, and have him for our protector. III. The hiſtory of thoſe demoniacks whom our Saviour healed, ſhews us, that the devil did then exerciſe his power over men, but that Chriſt was come to take away that power from him, and to deſtroy his kingdom. As to what happened to the herd of ſwine, which ran headlong into the ſea, after the devils had entered into them by the permiſſion of our Lord; it muſt be conſidered, that he was pleaſed by this loſs to try and puniſh the inhabitants of that country, and to ſhew that the men whom he had healed were really poſſeſſed; that he had power over devils, and that thoſe evil ſpirits could do nothing without his permiſſion; and the whole may ſerve to convince men of the power of *Jeſus Chriſt*, to inform them of the end of his coming into the world, and fully to perſuade them of the truth of his doctrine.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

THIS chapter contains: I. The cure of a man that had the palsy. II. The calling of St *Matthew* to the office of an apostle: and Christ's answer to those that were offended at his eating with sinners. III. His reply to the disciples of *John* the baptist, when they asked him, why his disciples did not fast as well as they? IV. The cure of a woman that had an issue of blood. V. The raising to life the ruler's daughter. VI. The giving sight to two blind men, and delivering the dumb man possessed with a devil. Lastly, Our Lord's exhortation to his disciples, to pray that God would send men to labour in the conversion of the people.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THERE may be two reflections made upon the healing the paralytic. The first, That our Lord had regard to the faith of that man, and of those that presented him; which shews, that it is by faith, and by an humble recourse to *Jesus Christ*, that we partake of the effects of his grace. The second, That since *Jesus Christ* had not only power to heal the sick, but likewise authority to forgive sin; we should look on him as our judge, and by faith and repentance dispose ourselves to receive from him remission of our sins. II. The answer our Lord returned to those that found fault at his eating with publicans and other men of bad life, teaches us, that he came into the world to save sinners, but that the end of his coming was likewise to call them to repentance. And therefore without amendment and holiness of life we cannot be saved. III. If *Jesus Christ* did not oblige his disciples to regular, set fasts, like those of *John*'s disciples, it was not because his

doctrine on this point differed from that of his forerunner, or because he condemned fasting, which he recommended both by example and precept, and by calling them to a life of mortification, not of ease and pleasure: but he acted thus for the same reason that he himself did not lead as retired and austere a life as *John* the baptist; that is, because the nature of his ministry obliged him to go from place to place, and to converse with all sorts of people. However, he declares that his disciples should afterwards be called, not only to fasting, but to the severest trials; and that if he did not expose them to those severities while he was with them, it was because they were not able to bear them; this he represents in the comparisons of the old garment, and old wine vessels. IV. The healing of a woman that had been diseased with a flux of blood twelve years, shews, that our Lord cured the most inveterate and incurable distempers; but above all, we ought to observe the humility and faith of that woman, who, not daring to speak to Christ, believed that if she could only touch his garment she should be whole, which accordingly came to pass. This example shews us, that our Lord has respect to humility and faith, and that the infallible means of obtaining his favour, is to have recourse to him with profound humility, and an entire confidence. V. The raising of the daughter of *Jairus*, proves that *Jesus Christ* had not only power to heal the sick, but that he could even restore life to the dead; which ought fully to convince us that he was sent from God, and confirm us in the belief and expectation of our own resurrection. VI. It is observed at the end of this chapter, that our Saviour seeing the people which followed him in great need of instruction and good guides, took pity on them, and bid his disciples *Pray the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest.* These words, which express the

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great love of our Saviour, ſhould inſpire us with the ſame ſentiments of compaſſion and kindneſs to thoſe that wander out of the way; and ſtir us up to beſeech God that he would ſend faithful miniſters, and bleſs their labours in the converſion of men, and eſtabliſhment of his kingdom.

CHAP. X.

WE ſee in this chapter: I. The calling and the names of the twelve apoſtles. II. The commands which our Lord gave them when he ſent them the firſt time into *Judea*, to declare that the kingdom of God was come. He foretels them that great troubles ſhould ariſe in the world on account of the goſpel, and that they ſhould be perſecuted; but to encourage them, he aſſured them of the divine protection and aſſiſtance, ſets before them his own example; exhorts them not to fear men, but God only; and declares what will happen to thoſe who confeſs or who deny him before men. Laſtly, He promiſes to reward thoſe who ſhall receive his diſciples, and do them good.

REFLECTIONS

JESUS CHRIST choſe the apoſtles to be the witneſſes of his life, his preaching, and his miracles, and that they themſelves might alſo go and preach the goſpel and work miracles, firſt among the Jews, and afterwards throughout the world Now ſince our Lord made choice of them, and God has been pleaſed to preſerve their names in the ſacred writings, their memory ought to be bleſſed in the church; we ought to imitate their virtues, and ſubmit to the doctrine which they taught, as well by word of mouth as in their writings. II. *Jeſus Chriſt* forbad his apoſtles to go at that time among the Gentiles,

tiles, or to the Samaritans, and commanded them to preach the gofpel to the Jews only, becaufe the time was not yet come that the apoftles fhould go into all parts of the world. For the fame reafon he bade them make no provifion for their journey, it being not neceffary then, becaufe they were not to go far off, and that their journies were to be but fhort, the defign of this firft miffion being only to fpread among the Jews, with greater expedition, the news of the coming of the kingdom of God: another reafon was, by this means to teach them to depend upon providence. III. In the inftructions which our Lord gave his apoftles, we learn, that thofe who preach the gofpel ought to do it with great difinterеftednefs, prudence, zeal and boldnefs; without fearing men, or death itfelf. IV. We learn that his doctrine is received by none but thofe who have a true heart, and who are of a meek and quiet fpirit; that it is to perfons of this character that the minifters of the gofpel fhould apply themfelves; but when they meet with people who will not hear nor receive them, they fhould leave them; and that thofe who thus reject the offers of God's grace, fhall be moft feverely punifhed. V. In this difcourfe of our Lord, we have a ftrong proof of the divinity of the Chriftian religion, fince the apoftles who preached it, and thofe who firft embraced it, were expofed to divers perfecutions, and fealed the truth of the gofpel and the fincerity of their own teftimony, with their blood. VI. We may make here feveral ufeful reflections, whereof thefe are the chief: That thofe who make profeffion of truth and piety, do often expofe themfelves to hatred and perfecution, but that God affifts them in a wonderful manner; that we fhould not fear men, who can only hurt our body, but God alone, who can caft both body and foul into hell; that troubles and divifions often arife in the world on account of the gofpel,

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but that this is entirely owing to the faults of men; that Christians ought to be ready to renounce all that is dearest to them in this world, to follow *Jesus Christ*. And lastly, That our Lord will abundantly recompence the piety and charity of those that shall receive and assist his disciples. All these considerations serve to encourage us stedfastly and openly to profess the Christian religion; to practice all its duties, and particularly to exercise works of charity with pleasure and perseverance.

CHAP. XI.

I. *JOHN* the baptist having sent two of his disciples to *Jesus Christ*, to know of him whether he were the Messiah, our Lord shews that he was so, by working miracles before them. II. He speaks of the nature and excellence of the office of *John* the baptist. III. He complains of the obstinacy of the Jews, who had made no improvement either by the ministry of *John* the baptist, or his own; and threatens the cities of *Galilee*, where he had preached and done miracles, without producing in them repentance and amendment. IV. He praises God that such as were of a meek and humble spirit did receive his doctrine, whilst those who passed in the world for the wisest and most knowing, rejected it; and he invites all those that were weary and heavy laden to come unto him.

REFLECTIONS.

TO make a right use of the reading of this chapter we must observe, I. That if *John* the baptist sent to inquire of our Lord whether he was the Messiah, it was not that he doubted of it: this would be a gross reflection upon that holy man, who had constantly declared that Jesus was the Son of God, and

and of whom our Lord in the gofpel, and even in this chapter, gives us a moft extraordinary character. But *John* the baptift fent his difciples to convince them that Jefus was he whom the Jews expected. II. However, our Lord would not tell them plainly that he was the Meffiah, but contented himfelf to prove, by miracles that he was fo, and to warn them not to be offended if he appeared in a very mean condition. III. It was with the fame defign that he made thofe who heard him take notice, that when they went to *John* the baptift in the wildernefs, it was not to fee a reed fhaken with the wind; meaning that they went not upon an occafion of very little importance, or to fee a very inconfiderable perfon; neither was it a man, that was to appear with pomp and fplendor, like thofe we meet with in kings palaces, but that they had feen in the perfon of *John* the baptift a great prophet, and even the greateft of prophets, fince he was the forerunner of the Meffiah; and that neverthelefs people oppofed him, and the kingdom of God which he preached, ever fince he began to appear. Chrift told them all this, to fhew that his kingdom was not of this world, and that they ought not to be furprifed if he himfelf appeared in fo low and abject a condition, and even though he were rejected. IV. Our Lord's complaint againft the Jews, who had profited neither by the preaching of *John* the baptift nor his own; objecting that the life of the former was too ftrict, and that of the latter not ftrict enough, may convince us that nothing can fatisfy unbelieving and vicious men, who reject all the means God makes ufe of for their conviction, and even take occafion from thence to harden themfelves yet more. V. The threatnings which our Lord denounced againft thofe cities where he had worked miracles, and they did not repent, is a warning to us, that thofe people who receive the greateft favours from God, having the gof-
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pel preached among them, and they do not grow better, ſhall be puniſhed with the utmoſt ſeverity. VI. Our Saviour's giving thanks to God, becauſe the mean and humble had received his doctrine, whilſt it was rejected by the great and wiſe men of the world, teaches us, that we cannot receive the goſpel without an upright, humble and honeſt heart, without renouncing worldly glory and falſe wiſdom. Laſtly, Since our Saviour does with ſo much tenderneſs invite all ſuch as labour and are heavy laden to be his diſciples, and aſſures them that his *yoke is eaſy, and his burden light*; let us draw near to him with an humble and lively ſenſe of our own miſery, and with an ardent deſire of being delivered from it; let us chearfully ſubmit to his doctrine and divine precepts; let us be meek and lowly of heart as he was, and then we ſhall find in him peace of mind and perfect happineſs.

CHAP. XII. 1—21.

I. OUR Saviour vindicates his diſciples plucking the ears of corn on the ſabbath day. II. He cures a man who had a withered hand, and confounds the Phariſees, who were offended at his having wrought that miracle upon the ſabbath day. III. He charges the people not to publiſh his miracles: whereupon St *Matthew* quotes a prophecy of *Iſaiah*, deſcribing the prudence, humility and meekneſs, that ſhould appear in the Meſſiah's manner of exerciſing his miniſtry.

Reflections.

THERE are three reflections to be made upon this firſt part of the twelfth chapter of St *Matthew*. I. The firſt relates to the malice and hypocriſy of the Phariſees, who found fault with the diſciples for plucking the ears of corn on the ſabbath day, and

because their master on the sabbath had healed a man with a withered hand. This is the character of hypocrites, and those that have only a false zeal; they are offended at things in their nature innocent, and even sometimes at such as are good, necessary and acceptable to God, whilst they themselves neglect the most essential duties of religion, and especially that of charity. II. What our Lord says upon this occasion deserves our serious attention, and chiefly these words, *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.* Let us learn from hence, that religion does not barely consist in things external, and in the observation of ceremonies; that indeed those things must not be despised or neglected, and have their use when practised in conformity to his will who has appointed them; but that what God requires above all is, that we should obey his commandments, that we should have true charity, and exercise works of mercy. III. The third reflection may be made upon the behaviour of *Jesus Christ*, who forbids the publishing his miracles; and upon these words of *Isaiah: He will not quench the smoaking flax, nor break intirely the bruised reed.* Here we see the great prudence of our Lord, who avoided every thing that looked like vanity or ostentation; as likewise his humility, meekness and condescension. We observe particularly, that he discourages no body, that he bears with the weakness of men with great patience; and while there is any good in us, he does not forsake us. This ought, on one hand, to encourage and make us confide in him; and on the other, induce us to imitate him, to be humble, meek and peaceable as he was; to avoid vainglory, and a desire of praise; to shun quarrels and disputes; to exercise great forbearance towards men, to make allowance for, and condescend to their weaknesses: thus we shall be like *Jesus Christ*, and shew that we are his disciples.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII. 22——50.

I. *CHRIST* cures a demoniack; and as the Pharisees attributed that miracle to the power of the devil, our Lord shews how false and impious that accusation was; saying, that the devil would not destroy his own kingdom, and that he could not cast out devils, if he had not a greater power than that of devils; he threatned the Pharisees that their blasphemies should never be pardoned, and that their impious discourse was a proof of the extream wickedness of their hearts. II. Being desired by the Pharisees to shew them a sign, he refused to do it, referring them to the resurrection, which was to be the last and strongest proof of his divine mission; and he laments the unbelief of the Jews, mentioning upon that account the example of the *Ninevites*, that of the queen of *Sheba*, and a parable. III. He declares that his true disciples were as dear to him as his nearest relations.

REFLECTIONS.

WE here find, I. That the Pharisees, instead of acknowledging the divine power, which appeared so evidently in our Saviour's miracles, said, he cast out devils by the power of the devil. We see in this instance, that men, blinded by their passions, can resist the most powerful means of conviction. II. Our Lord declares that this blasphemy of the Pharisees, in ascribing to the devil what proceeded from the Spirit of God, should never be forgiven them; because such blasphemy was a sign of their desperate wickedness and incurable obstinacy. We cannot at this day fall into exactly the same sin as these Pharisees did; but we may become extremely guilty by impious and profane thoughts and expressions, by resisting the truth when made known to us, or by quenching

quenching the operations of God's holy Spirit in our hearts. III. From the blasphemy of the Pharisees our Lord took an occasion to declare that good discourses are the signs of a good heart; that wicked discourses proceed from a corrupt heart; and that men must give an account of all the evil words they have spoken; let us learn from hence, that a good man is known by his words, and that the way to regulate them, is to sanctify our heart. IV. Upon the Pharisees desiring Christ to give them a sign, after so many miracles he had already wrought in their sight, we may observe, that unbelievers and those who have a wicked heart, are never satisfied, and that nothing is clear or strong enough for their conviction. And our Lord's refusing to give them such a sign, shews us, that when God has done all that is necessary to overcome the hardness of mens hearts, if it proves ineffectual, he gives them up to their own obstinate temper. V. If the examples of the queen of *Sheba*, and of the *Ninevites*, condemned the unbelieving Jews, they will condemn us much more if we do not repent, since God has been more kind to us than he was to them. VI. By the comparison of the evil spirit which entered again into a man after it had gone out, our Lord shewed the miseries that were to befal the Jews, who, after all he had done to cure their infidelity, still persisted in it: and it is a warning to us, that those who have been partakers of the grace of God, and make an ill use of it, shall be deprived of it, and shall fall into greater condemnation. Lastly, Our Saviour's declaring that those who do the will of God, are as dear to him as his mother and brethren, teaches us, that holiness and the observation of God's commandments, is the true mark of the disciples of Jesus, and is what admits us into a share of his love; that therefore we ought to apply ourselves above all things to hear his word, and keep it.

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This likewiſe ſhews us, that thoſe who love God, and fear him, are the people to whom we ought chiefly to devote our love and eſteem.

CHAP. XIII. 1—23.

OUR Lord propoſes the parable of the ſeed, and afterwards explains it in private to his diſciples.

REFLECTIONS.

IT is proper to obſerve in general, upon the parables in this chapter, and in ſeveral other places in the goſpel, that our Lord uſed, in his teaching, to make uſe of parables and ſimilitudes; and that his diſciples and the people might remember them the better, he borrowed them from the plaineſt and moſt familiar ſubjects. Theſe parables were of two kinds. Some were clear, and others ſomewhat obſcure. Theſe laſt *Jeſus Chriſt* made uſe of, when he was ſpeaking of ſome points which his hearers were not at that time able to comprehend, and which he did not think fit to declare openly before his death. Such are the parables which foretold his being put to death; the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles in their ſtead. Theſe truths he repreſented by images and ſimilitudes, very plain and eaſy to remember, and which in a ſhort time would, by the event, be made perfectly clear and intelligible. Theſe parables diſplay the great wiſdom of our Lord, prove that he foreknew things to come, ſince moſt of them were prophetic; and afford us, in their completion, a convincing proof of the divinity of the goſpel. The deſign of *Jeſus Chriſt* in the parable of the ſeed is, to teach his diſciples how the word of God is received by thoſe to whom it is declared. He ſpeaks of four kinds of perſons: The firſt, are thoſe on whom the word makes no impreſſion, and whoſe

whofe hearts are entirely hardened, which is reprefented by the feed falling on the way fide. The fecond, are thofe that receive the word with joy, but embracing the gofpel without due reflection, forfake the truth and holinefs, as foon as they are expofed to perfecution, or fome other trial: *Chrift* reprefents the ftate of fuch people, by the feed falling in ftony places, which indeed fprings up, but having no root, withers away prefently. The third fort of hearers, are thofe who make the word of God of none effect by the love of riches and pleafures, and by the cares of this life, as feed falling among thorns is choked and becometh unfruitful. The laft are thofe who receive it in an honeft and good heart, where it produces its fruit and its effect, and who perfevere to the end; this is reprefented by the feed fown in good ground, where it brings forth fruit in abundance. This is the meaning and defign of this beautiful parable: and it tends to inftruct us in the ufe we are to make of the gofpel when preached to us. What our Saviour faid to his difciples when he explained to them this parable, fhould lead us Chriftians to acknowledge, how happy we are to be inftructed in thefe divine truths, to know the myfteries of the kingdom of God, and to be more enlightened than all the ancient prophets. Let us make a good ufe of thefe advantages, left we fall into fin, and into the condemnation of thofe who fee and hear, but will not receive nor underftand the truth, and refufe to be converted.

CHAP. XIII. 24—58.

I. *CHRIST* propofes feveral parables; as the parable of the tares, the grain of muftard-feed, and the leaven, of treafure hid in a field, a pearl of great price, and of the net. II. He then exhorts his difciples to make a right ufe of his inftructions, and after-

afterwards goes to *Nazareth*, where few believed on him.

REFLECTIONS.

THE parables of the tares, and of the net, have the same tendency: they signify, according to the explanation our Saviour himself gives of them, that among those who should profess the gospel, there would be many hypocrites, and that the wicked would be mixed with the good till the end of the world; but that then they shall be separated from each other; that the wicked shall be condemned to everlasting torments, and the righteous received into eternal glory. The use therefore we are to make of these parables is, not to be prejudiced against the gospel, if we see among Christians some that fall into vice and error; to stand upon our guard, and avoid the company of wicked men, lest we be seduced by them; but, nevertheless, to think always charitably of them; to do our utmost to recover them from their errors; and, as to ourselves, to labour to be of the number of the righteous, that at *Christ*'s second coming, we may be admitted into his kingdom. By the similitude of the mustard-seed, and that of leaven, the design of our Lord was to shew, that though the number of his disciples was then but very small, and his doctrine scarce known in the world, yet it should be soon spread over the whole earth. *Christ* foretold this in mystical and hidden expressions; not thinking fit, at that time, to declare openly, for fear of giving offence to the Jews, that the Gentiles and all nations should come into the church. Thus these parables are prophetical, and their true import and meaning is manifest in the establishment of Christianity in so many parts of the world, as their divine author had foretold. Let us give thanks to God, that this heavenly doctrine has been extended even to us, and

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let us beſeech him, that he would more and more eſtabliſh his kingdom among us, by ſanctifying his church; and that he would call to the knowledge thereof thoſe people who are deprived of it, or who have never embraced it, to the end that the whole earth may be full of his knowledge and of his glory, and that the name of God our Father may be glorified in all places, through *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord. *Amen.*

The ſimilitudes of the hidden treaſure and of the pearl, may convince us, that there is nothing more precious nor more excellent than the goſpel, and the advantages that attend it; that the greateſt happineſs which we can enjoy, is to be poſſeſſed of thoſe advantages; and therefore, that we ought gladly to improve every opportunity of procuring them, and even to renounce all that is deareſt to us in this world to acquire ſuch a precious treaſure. Let us carefully retain theſe divine inſtructions of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*; let us lay them up in our hearts, that they may continually furniſh us with neceſſary ſupplies and encouragements to reſiſt temptations, and excite us to the love of God and the practice of good works. We may obſerve, at the end of this chapter, that the inhabitants of *Nazareth* believed not on *Jeſus Chriſt*, though they heard his doctrine, and ſaw ſome of his miracles, becauſe they looked upon him as the ſon of a carpenter, and becauſe he was bred among them; which made our Lord tell them, that no prophet was received in his own country. Men are too apt to ſlight God's favours, and the moſt valuable bleſſings he vouchſafes them, becauſe they are common, and may be eaſily enjoyed; and therefore God, ſeeing their ingratitude, deprives them of them, as it happened to thoſe of *Nazareth*, becauſe of their unbelief.

CHAP. XIV.

ST *Matthew* relates three things in this chapter. I. The death of *John* the baptist. II. *Christ*'s feeding five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes. III. Another miracle of our Lord, who, when his disciples were exposed to a storm, came to them walking upon the sea.

REFLECTIONS.

I. WE may make this general reflection upon the death of *John* the baptist, namely, that God was pleased to suffer that this holy man, who had preached the coming of the kingdom of God, should die a violent death, to convince the Jews that his kingdom was not to be a temporal one; and that they might not be offended when *Christ* himself should be put to death. It may be observed in the next place, that the cause of *John* the baptist's death, was the zeal of that prophet in reproving *Herod* for his criminal correspondence with *Herodias*; the hatred which that immodest woman had conceived against *John* on that account, and the complaisance *Herod* had for her. The reflections that are to be made upon all this are, That the servants of God ought to rebuke all sorts of persons with courage and zeal, though they often draw upon themselves thereby the hatred of wicked men; that impurity, and the love of pleasures, make people commit many sins: And lastly, that great evils may result from rash oaths, as well as from a false shame, and the complaisance that we have for wicked people. The miracle of the five loaves has this particularity in it, that it was wrought in the presence of several thousand men, who were witnesses, and shared in the benefit of it; which renders this miracle yet more certain, and proves the won-

derful power of our Lord, as well as his great goodneſs towards the people that followed him. Laſtly, The other miracle that *Chriſt* did, when he went to his diſciples walking upon the ſea, is another proof of his unlimited power, and of his love to his diſciples: he was pleaſed, upon this occaſion, to make St *Peter* walk on the water, to confirm the faith of that apoſtle and of his brethren; and to aſſure them that they ſhould afterwards do many extraordinary miracles, and that no danger ſhould terrify them. As to ourſelves, we are to make two reflections. Firſt, that if true Chriſtians are expoſed to dangers, God comes ſeaſonably to their aſſiſtance; and ſecondly, that as the zeal and faith of St *Peter* enabled him at firſt to walk upon the water, into which he afterwards ſunk, through fear; ſo it is the want of faith only that makes us yield to temptations and dangers, but that we may happily ſurmount them by faith, and the divine aſſiſtance.

CHAP. XV.

I. *CHRIST* vindicates his diſciples for not obſerving the traditions and cuſtoms of the Jews, who waſhed their hands before their meals: a ceremony which the Jews obſerved, not for cleanlineſs only, but as a part of religion, without which they thought they muſt be unclean. Our Lord reproaches the Phariſees, who were offended at it, with violating, themſelves, the divine law by their traditions, teaching that if any one devoted to God a part of his eſtate, wherewith he might have relieved his father or mother, it was not lawful for him, after ſuch a vow, to apply it to their aſſiſtance. II. In the next place, our Lord ſhews what it is that defiles a man, and what does not defile him. III. He heals the daughter of a *Canaanitiſh* woman, and ſeveral ſick

ſick people; and, IV. Feeds four thouſand men with ſeven loaves and a few fiſhes.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS diſcourſe between *Chriſt* and the Phariſees, furniſhes us with the following inſtructions: I. That hypocrites make religion and piety to conſiſt only in external duties, and oftentimes in ſuch as are vain and of very ſmall weight; that they ſcrupulouſly obſerve theſe things, and condemn thoſe that do not, whilſt they themſelves violate the moſt important duties, and the moſt poſitive commands of God. II. That the duty of children to their parents is altogether inviolable, that nothing can diſpenſe with it, and that they are particularly obliged to aſſiſt them in time of need. III. That vows and oaths, which are raſh, and contrary to the divine law, ought not to be kept. IV. That God rejects the worſhip of thoſe who only honour him with their mouths and lips, but whoſe hearts are far from him; and that he will be ſerved as he has commanded in his word, and not according to the inventions and directions of men. V. That not only external actions defile men, and render them guilty before God, but likewiſe and chiefly the wicked thoughts and motions of the heart, and deſires tending to impurity, to unrighteouſneſs, to pride, to ſlander, and other ſins. This is a doctrine which we muſt never forget, and which obliges us more particularly to ſtudy the internal ſanctification and purity of the heart and conſcience. VI. We ought to take particular notice of the miracle which *Chriſt* wrought in healing the daughter of the *Canaanitiſh* woman. He refuſed at firſt to cure her, becauſe her mother was a Gentile; his reaſon for ſo doing was, not only by that means to excite the zeal of that woman, but likewiſe becauſe the time was not yet come in which the Gentiles were to be called; and becauſe, during

his ſtay upon earth, he wrought miracles only among the Jews. But ſeeing her perſeverance and great humility, he did at laſt what ſhe deſired of him. By this example we may obſerve, that prayers made with faith, humility and perſeverance, are very acceptable to God, and very powerful; that if God does not hear us at firſt, it is to try us, to encourage our zeal, and to render us more ſenſible of our own unworthineſs; but if we continue to call upon him fervently, he grants us at laſt thoſe favours we beg of him. Laſtly, This miracle, as well as a great number more which our Lord wrought in healing the ſick, in feeding four thouſand men with ſeven loaves and a few fiſhes, and the like, ſhould lead us to acknowledge the infinite power of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and his exceeding great love towards men; and ought to excite us to praiſe God at the hearing of ſo many wonders, and to glorify him, as thoſe did who were eye-witneſſes of them.

CHAP. XVI.

THIS chapter has four parts: I. *Chriſt* refuſes to ſhew a ſign, which the Phariſees deſired of him, and reproaches them for their blindneſs. II. He warns his diſciples to take heed of the leaven of the Phariſees. III. Having aſked the apoſtles their opinion concerning him, St *Peter* confeſſes that he was the *Chriſt*, the Son of the living God; whereupon our Lord makes him very gracious promiſes. IV. He foretels his own death; exhorts his diſciples to prepare for ſufferings; and to engage them ſo to do, he repreſents the worth of the ſoul, and the great importance of ſecuring the ſalvation of it. He likewiſe foretels that ſome of his diſciples ſhould not die till his kingdom was eſtabliſhed, and he himſelf come to deſtroy the Jews: which proved true of thoſe diſciples who lived till that time, and particularly of St *John*.

Reflections.

I. THE firſt reflection we ought to make here, relates to the blindneſs of the Phariſees, who, notwithſtanding *Chriſt* had done ſo many miracles to convince them that the time of the Meſſiah's coming was fulfilled, were ſtill urgent with our Lord to ſhew them a ſign; which he very juſtly refuſed to do. When God has given ſufficient proofs of the truth of the goſpel, if men do not ſubmit to it, they muſt not expect that God will work continual miracles to overcome their unbelief. II. The meaning of the warning that *Chriſt* gave his diſciples, to beware of the leaven of the Phariſees and of the Sadducees was, that they ſhould be upon their guard againſt the doctrine of the Phariſees, who ſtuck to the outſide of religion, and to the traditions; and alſo againſt the doctrine of the Sadducees, who denied the reſurrection, and the immortality of the ſoul. This is a leſſon to us, to avoid with great care ſuperſtition and hypocriſy, as well as impious and libertine opinions. III. It appears from this chapter, that the Jews had a high opinion of *Jeſus Chriſt*; and particularly, that the apoſtles were firmly perſuaded that he was the *Chriſt* the Son of the living God: this is the great and fundamental truth, which ought to be believed and confeſſed by Chriſtians before the whole world. IV. The promiſe that *Chriſt* made to St *Peter*, when he ſaid to him, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*; ſignifies, that St *Peter* would be one of his principal miniſters in the eſtabliſhment of his church; and ſhould firſt preach the goſpel both to Jews and Gentiles. V. When we ſee *Chriſt* foretelling his death, and ſeverely rebuking St *Peter*, who (being full of the prejudices of the Jews) could not be perſuaded that the Meſſiah was to die, we muſt

consider, that our Lord spake in that sharp manner, not because he did not love the apostle, but more fully to convince him, and all the disciples, that it was necessary he should suffer death; and to shew them he was resolved so to do. VI. The last verses of this chapter furnish us with several instructions of great moment, and particularly these three; 1. That the first thing *Christ* requires of his disciples is, to renounce themselves, and to be prepared for sufferings; and that the desire of preserving our lives should never hinder us from following and obeying him. 2. That the salvation of the soul is the most important thing imaginable; and that it is of no advantage to gain the whole world, if a man loses his own soul. 3. That the Son of God will come with glory from heaven, to render to all according to their works.

CHAP. XVII.

THIS chapter contains, I. The history of the transfiguration of *Jesus Christ*. II. The discourse he had with his apostles about the coming of *Elias*, whom the Jews expected. III. The casting out a devil, which the apostles could not cast out. IV. A miracle wrought by Christ for the payment of the tribute money, given by the Jews for the maintenance of the temple and divine service.

Reflections.

I. OUR Lord was pleased to be transfigured a little before his death in the presence of three of his apostles, and to shew them his glory, to strengthen their faith, and to fortify them against the scandal which his death might have given them. The appearing of *Moses* and *Elias*, at that time, shews, that Christ was he whose coming the prophets had foretold, and that he was greater than the most excellent

of the prophets. It proves alſo, that theſe holy men were not annihilated, and that therefore there is another life reſerved for good men after this. And the voice which God cauſed to be heard from heaven on this occaſion, informs us, that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God, to whom alone we ſhould hearken, and to whom we owe perfect obedience. II. What Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples, that *John* the baptiſt was that *Elias*, whoſe coming the prophets had foretold, ſhould convince us of the dignity of the perſon of *John* the baptiſt, and of the authority of his miniſtry. In the hiſtory of the demoniack, whom the apoſtles could not cure, we find that Chriſt was inveſted with a power which nothing could reſiſt, and that he was at the ſame time full of compaſſion towards the miſerable. We likewiſe ſee, that the want of faith in the apoſtles, was the cauſe they could not work this miracle; and that, on the contrary, the father of that poor creature did by his faith obtain the cure of his ſon. This ſhews us, how neceſſary and how efficacious faith is, and how great reaſon we have to endeavour to be ſtrengthned in it, ſince it is not leſs neceſſary now for our ſalvation, than it was formerly to enable to perform or procure miracles. The concern which the apoſtles ſhewed when Chriſt foretold his death, is another proof of the weakneſs of their faith; but we who know that Chriſt died that he might obtain for us everlaſting life, ought to conſider his death as the foundation of our hopes and our happineſs. Laſtly, The miraculous manner by which our Lord paid the tribute, is a remarkable effect of his power: he was alſo pleaſed to ſhew thereby that he did not deſpiſe the things that concerned religion; and it is an example for us to ſubmit to public order, and to give, without grudging, ſome portion of our goods, when the ſervice of God and works of piety are concerned.

CHAP. XVIII.

I. THE apoſtles aſk our Lord, which of them ſhould be the greateſt in the kingdom of heaven. They put this queſtion to him, becauſe they were of the ſame opinion with the Jews, that the kingdom of the Meſſiah would be eſtabliſhed upon earth, and that there would be great offices and places to be obtained in this kingdom. Our Lord, to undeceive them, places a little child in the midſt of them, and exhorts them to become like little children: he adviſes them not to deſpiſe thoſe that believe in him, though they are very mean as to this world. He repreſents to them, the great ſin of giving offence to any of the faithful, and that he calls even the greateſt ſinners to repentance and ſalvation. This whole diſcourſe of Jeſus Chriſt tends to deliver the apoſtles from thoſe prejudices under which they laboured with reſpect to the kingdom of the Meſſiah, and to inſpire them with ſentiments of charity and humility. In the ſecond part of this chapter, Chriſt teaches his diſciples how to behave towards their offending brethren, and what the church is to do with thoſe who refuſe to ſubmit to its directions. After this he repreſents, by a parable, the obligation we are under to forgive one another.

Reflections.

THE Saviour of the world teaches us in the firſt part of this chapter, I. That to enter into the kingdom of heaven, we muſt be extremely humble, and ſet our hearts no more upon the glories and honours of this world, than little children do. II. That we ought to have a very great regard for the true diſciples of Chriſt, though they ſhould be but low and mean among men; that good people are dear

dear to God, and therefore we ought to esteem and comfort them, since he causes his holy angels to watch over them, and will severely punish those who afflict, despise, or offend them. These considerations should likewise encourage the faithful, and inspire them with great confidence. III. Christ says of offences, that they are a great evil; that they must needs come, and yet that God is not the cause of them; that they proceed intirely from the faults of men; and that he will punish those who are the occasion of them: It follows from hence, that we ought to avoid sin and giving offence with the utmost care; and that we may do it by following our Lord's advice, and avoiding every thing that may be a stumbling-block to ourselves or others. Lastly, What our Lord says here, that there is joy in heaven over one repenting sinner, shews, that it is not lawful to despise any body; but on the contrary, that we ought to procure the conversion of sinners, and the edification and salvation of all men, as far as in us lies. In the second part of this chapter, I. Christ establishes the authority and discipline of the church, and the necessity of reproofs, both private and public; he shews, that all the members of the church ought to submit themselves to the discipline established in it, and that such as refuse to hear the church, ought to be looked upon as heathens and publicans; that is to say, they should not be any longer accounted members of the church, but be cut off from its communion: And he declares that God ratifies and confirms in heaven, what the church does here below agreeable to his intentions. II. The promise that our Lord makes, to be present with, and hear those that are gathered together in his name, teaches us, that the prayers that are offered up in the spirit of unity and charity, are very acceptable to God, as well as those congregations that are formed to serve and call upon him. Lastly, Christ instructs

us in the nature and neceſſity of forgiveneſs. He explains the nature of it, by ſaying, that a man ought to pardon even ſeventy times ſeven faults; which denotes, that forgiveneſs ought to be general and unlimited, and that we ſhould be diſpoſed to pardon all perſons, and all ſorts of offences, even ſuch as are continued and repeated; and that at all times, without ever being diſcouraged. He ſhews the neceſſity of ſuch forgiveneſs, by the parable of the ſervant to whom his maſter had remitted a very conſiderable debt; and who would not pardon a very ſmall ſum to one of his fellow ſervants. This parable ſets before our eyes, firſt, The infinite goodneſs of God, who vouchſafes to pardon us his ſervants and his creatures, though our ſins are very great and very numerous: ſecondly, The guilt and ingratitude of thoſe who refuſe to pardon men who are their equals, and whoſe offences are very trifling in compariſon of the ſins we commit againſt God. Thirdly, The juſt and terrible puniſhment of all thoſe who do not pardon heartily, and univerſally, the offences and injuries they have received.

CHAP. XIX.

I. THE Phariſees having aſked our Lord, whether it was lawful for huſbands to put away their wives, as was the practice of the Jews; he anſwers them, that divorces were contrary to the firſt inſtitution of marriage, and that they ought not to prevail any longer. II. He bleſſes little children that were brought unto him. III. A rich young man aſking what he muſt do to be ſaved, our Saviour, to prove him, whether he was prepared to follow him, told him, to go and ſell all that he had. This anſwer diſcouraging the young man, he took occaſion from hence to declare, that the love of riches would hinder

many from being ſaved; and promiſes his apoſtles, who had forſaken all to follow him, that they ſhould ſit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of *Iſrael*; that is, ſhould be highly exalted, when his kingdom was eſtabliſhed, and be very conſiderable in the church. He promiſes alſo to reward thoſe who ſhould leave all for the ſake of the goſpel.

Reflections.

I. WHAT our Saviour ſays at the beginning of this chapter, with reſpect to the divorces that were in uſe among the Jews, teaches us in general, that many things which had been tolerated till that time, by reaſon of the condition of that people, and of their hard and carnal temper, would not be allowed among Chriſtians, becauſe God has given them greater light, and called them to a higher degree of holineſs. II. We learn here particularly, that by the divine inſtitution, a man and a woman are inſeparably united by the laws of matrimony; that thoſe laws ought to be inviolably obſerved, and that nothing but adultery can juſtify a divorce, nor afford a liberty of marrying again. Chriſt ſhews us beſides, that the goſpel calls us to great chaſtity, and even that there would be Chriſtians that would abſolutely renounce marriage, in order to ſerve God more acceptably, and with leſs interruption labour in promoting Chriſtianity. III. Our Lord's bleſſing the little children, which were preſented to him, ſhews us, that ſuch children are dear to him, and that he is diſpoſed to receive and bleſs them; from whence we may infer, that the devoting them to him by prayer and baptiſm, is very agreeable to his will: he would likewiſe teach us thereby, that we muſt be like little children in ſimplicity, innocence and meekneſs, if we would enter into the kingdom of God. IV. The diſcourſe our Lord had with the rich young

man

man mentioned in this chapter, teaches us, that to enter into life everlasting, we must keep the commandments of God; and further, be ready to forsake all that we possess in this world when God calls us to it, and when we cannot keep them without being wanting in our duty towards him. The concern which this young man discovered at what Christ said to him, and the declaration of our Saviour, that it would be very hard for rich men to resolve to forsake their goods to come into the church, shews, that riches do commonly fix our hearts upon the world, and that the enjoyment of them is always dangerous. Neverthelesss, Christ has taught us, that such a renunciation of worldly goods is not an impossible thing; but, on the contrary, both practicable, and even easy and agreeable too, when we are enlightened by faith, and assisted by the Spirit of God. If all Christians are not called, as the apostles were, to forsake all to follow Christ, we ought, at least, to take heed that the good things of this life do not hinder our salvation; we ought not to set our heart upon them, but should learn to use them without abusing them, and to employ them in works of piety and charity. By this means we shall procure to ourselves a treasure in heaven, and partake of those blessings with which our Lord has promised to reward, both in this world and the next, such as shall fulfil all these duties.

CHAP. XX.

THIS chapter contains, I. The parable of the labourers, who, going to work in the vineyard at different hours of the day, did all of them receive the same wages. II. Christ's foretelling his own death and resurrection. III. His answer to the mother of St *James* and St *John*, who desired for her sons

ſons the chief place in his kingdom. IV. He gives ſight to two blind men.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THE deſign of our Lord in the parable of the labourers, was to teach his diſciples, that the glorious rewards which he had promiſed to thoſe who ſhould forſake all for the goſpel, did not relate to them only; but that others, who ſhould be called after them, even from among the Gentiles, would partake of the ſame rewards as thoſe that were called firſt; and that, far from being jealous upon this account, they ought to rejoice at it. We muſt not, however, make a wrong uſe of this parable, nor conclude from thence, that it will be ſoon enough to repent at the end of our lives; on the contrary, we ſhould conſider, that all thoſe that went into the vineyard at different hours of the day, went thither as ſoon as the maſter of the vineyard ſent them; that thoſe who did not go till the end of the day, did not go ſooner becauſe they were not ſooner ſent; and that this was the reaſon why they did receive the ſame wages as the reſt. From whence it appears, that thoſe who obey whenſoever God is pleaſed to call them, ſhall be ſaved; but this has no reſpect to thoſe, who have been called a long while, even from the beginning of their lives, and have refuſed to obey the call; this very parable proves, that ſuch are without excuſe; and that we are all of us indiſpenſibly obliged to labour with fidelity and perſeverance, and, as ſoon as God calls, to do his will. II. We may obſerve in this chapter, that our Lord forewarned his diſciples of his being ſhortly to be put to death, that they might not be ſurpriſed when it did happen. III. Chriſt's anſwer to the mother of *James* and *John* deſerves to be conſidered. This woman imagining, as the reſt of the Jews did, that the

the Messiah should reign upon the earth, like the kings of this world, claimed for her two sons the highest posts in his kingdom, as being of our Lord's kindred, and even distinguished from the rest of the apostles upon several occasions. Jesus Christ condemned that request, which shewed, that this woman did not understand the nature of his kingdom; and which might too have occasioned jealousies and divisions among the apostles. He told them, that they ought rather to be humbled and abased, and prepared to drink of the same cup with him, and be baptized with his baptism; that is, to suffer as he should, and not think of being exalted to dignities and preferments, like the great ones of this world; and that he might inspire them with such sentiments, he referred them to his example, saying, that he was come into the world to appear like a servant, and to suffer death. These words of our Saviour are a warning to all Christians, to expel from their hearts pride and ambition; not to seek after honour, or affect to be preferred before others; but to live humbly, and bear our cross, according to the example which the Son of God has given us. At the end of this chapter, we have a proof of our Lord's power, as well as of his tender compassion, in giving sight to two blind men.

CHAP. XXI. 1——22.

I. OUR Lord makes his royal entry into *Jerusalem.* II. Drives out of the temple those that profaned it. III. Answers the Pharisees, who found fault with the acclamations of the people on his behalf. And, IV. Causes the fig-tree to wither away.

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REFLECTIONS.

TO underſtand the reaſon and deſign of our Saviour's royal entry into *Jeruſalem*, we muſt obſerve, that he had avoided till then all appearance of pomp, and being acknowledged publicly for the Meſſiah; but he thought fit, ſix days before his death, to make known to the world that he was the Meſſiah foretold by the prophets, and to be acknowledged for ſuch by the people that attended him, and to enter into the temple in the midſt of the acclamations of a great multitude. Nevertheleſs, he did it after a manner that by no means reſembled the ſplendor of worldly princes; but which diſcovered a great deal of humility and meekneſs, and which was agreeable to what *Zachariah* had propheſied, ſaying, that the Meſſiah ſhould come *meek, and ſitting upon an aſs*; which tended to ſhew, that he was the great King which God had promiſed to his people; but that his kingdom was not of this world. Let us here acknowledge the glory of our Redeemer, and at the ſame time his great goodneſs; let us render him our homage, in imitation of the people that followed him to *Jeruſalem*; and ſince we know him much better than they did, let us worſhip him with greater reſpect and reverence; let us rejoice at his coming, and ſay, *Bleſſed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord.* That action of Chriſt, in driving away thoſe, that bought and ſold in the outward courts of the temple things pertaining to the ſacrifices, was an effect of his great zeal, by which he was pleaſed to make the Jews ſenſible of his divine and heavenly authority. From hence we may learn, not to profane the places in which God is worſhipped, either by appearing there irreverently, or by rendering to God a hypocritical ſervice. As for the miracle of the fig-tree that withered away, our Lord did it to

ſtrengthen

ſtrengthen the faith of his diſciples, at a time when he was going to ſuffer death, and to inſtruct them in the virtue and efficacy of faith and prayer.

CHAP. XXI. 23—46.

THIS leſſon conſiſts of three parts; I. Christ's anſwer to the Phariſees, who demanded of him an account of his authority. II. The parable of the two ſons whom their father ſent into the vineyard. III. The parable of the huſbandmen, who, after they had killed their maſter's ſervants, did likewiſe ſlay his ſon.

Reflections.

WE muſt obſerve, in the firſt place, that when the Phariſees aſked our Lord, from whence he derived his authority; he would not anſwer them directly, but was pleaſed to ſtop their mouths by aſking them, what they thought of the baptiſm of *John*; by which he would convince them of a voluntary and malicious ignorance, and at the ſame time make them ſenſible that his authority proceeded from God, as well as that of *John* the baptiſt, his forerunner. As for us, by whom this authority is perfectly underſtood, and who know that the doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, as well as that of *John* the baptiſt, is divine, we ought to ſubmit ourſelves thereto, leſt our incredulity expoſe us to greater condemnation than the Phariſees. The parable of the two ſons, ſignifies, that thoſe people who were looked upon as the moſt corrupt and vicious, had believed the preaching of *John* the baptiſt ſooner than the Phariſees and the chief men of the Jews, who, profeſſing to be more learned and more holy than other men, ought to have been the firſt in receiving it. This parable is applicable to ſinners, who, repenting truly of their ſins, return

to

to their duty; and to bad Christians, who, having engaged to serve God, and to obey him, break their promises, and do not answer to their calling. The similitude of the husbandmen denotes three things: First, The favours that God had shewn the Jews in choosing them for his people, and in sending to them his servants at several times, and at last his own Son. Secondly, The ingratitude and naughtiness of the Jews, who, instead of acknowledging these favours, had rejected and persecuted the prophets, and crucified the Lord of life. Thirdly, That God would punish the Jews by destroying them, by taking away his covenant from them, and by calling the Gentiles in their stead; and that Christ, who had been rejected by the chief of the Jews, should be exalted to the highest glory, as had been foretold by the prophecy in the CXVIIIth psalm. What this parable signified, is exactly come to pass; the Jews having been destroyed and rejected, the gospel preached to the Gentiles, and the kingdom of God established throughout the world. Thus God deprives of his favour and of his covenant those who do not make a right use of them, nor produce the fruits which he expects from them.

CHAP. XXII. 1——22.

CHRIST continues the discourses of the preceding chapter, and proposes, I. The parable of the marriage. II. He answers the Pharisees, when they asked him, if it was lawful to pay tribute to the emperor.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THE meaning of the parable of the marriage is, that the Jews had been first called to salvation by Jesus Christ, but that they would reject it,

it; and for that reaſon would be deſtroyed; that afterwards God would offer that favour to the Gentiles; that the Gentiles would receive it, and be admitted into his covenant: but that there would be among thoſe that came into the church, hypocrites, who ſhould likewiſe receive the puniſhment of their crime. All that our Saviour foretold by this ſimilitude has been fulfilled, the divine vengeance having fallen upon the unbelieving Jews, and the Gentiles having been called and received into the church; which is an inconteſtable proof of the divinity of the goſpel, and the certainty of the promiſes contained therein. Let us learn from hence, that God is very gracious to men, when he calls them to ſalvation; and that thoſe who ſlight and do not improve his kind invitation, have reaſon to expect the ſevereſt vengeance. Let us particularly obſerve what was ſaid to the man who ſat down to table without a wedding garment, and was caſt out. God will not only puniſh thoſe who openly reject the goſpel, but hypocrites alſo, who calling themſelves Chriſtians, and living in the external communion of the church, without being clothed with ſincere faith and true holineſs, ſhall not eſcape the puniſhment due to their hypocriſy. Thoſe who aſked our Lord, whether it was lawful to give tribute unto *Ceſar*; deſigned by this queſtion, either to render him odious to the people, if he ſaid it was their duty to pay tribute; or to accuſe him to *Pilate*, if he anſwered, no. Our Lord's reply to this captious queſtion, is an argument of his profound wiſdom; and teaches us, that our duty to kings and princes, and our duty towards God, are both indiſpenſible, and that they are not oppoſite to each other; but, on the contrary, are perfectly conſiſtent: therefore we ought religiouſly to obſerve them both, ſubmitting to the higheſt powers, and paying them their due, in ſuch manner, nevertheleſs, as not to forget

that

that our duty to God challenges the firſt place, and ought always to be firſt and chiefly regarded.

CHAP. XXII. 23—46.

I. THE Sadduces, who denied the reſurrection of the dead, having propoſed to Chriſt the caſe of a woman that had ſeven huſbands, and in order to confound him, having aſked which of the ſeven ſhe would belong to after the reſurrection; our Lord anſwers, that there would be no ſuch thing as marrying in the life to come, and proves from the ſcriptures, that the dead ſhould riſe again. II. He anſwers a queſtion put to him by a ſcribe, about the greateſt commandment of the law. III. He aſks the Phariſees, How the Meſſiah was both the ſon of *David* and his Lord? which they could not anſwer, and he did not think fit to explain to them.

REFLECTIONS.

IN Chriſt's diſcourſe with the Sadduces about the reſurrection, we ought to admire his divine wiſdom, and, at the ſame time, the ſtrength and evidence with which he confounds them, and proves that the dead ſhall riſe again. This paſſage of the goſpel teaches us clearly two things: Firſt, That nothing is more certain than the reſurrection of the dead; and that thoſe who have been acceptable to God in their life-time, as the patriarchs, are not annihilated by death. This doctrine is the ſupport of our faith and hope. Secondly, What ſhall be the ſtate of the ſaints in glory: Of which Chriſt has told us, that the bands of fleſh and blood ſhall not ſubſiſt in the life to come, and that the bleſſed will not be any more ſubject to the wants of the body and neceſſities of this life, but will be like the angels of God. This conſideration ſhould induce us to be-

come ſpiritual men here, and live in great purity, becauſe without this we cannot attain at length to a happy reſurrection. II. Chriſt inculcates here another very important doctrine; which is, that the great commandment of the law is, *To love God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourſelves:* and ſince this is the ſum of all religion, let it be our great care to fix in our hearts this true love of God, and of all men. III. With reſpect to the queſtion which Chriſt put to the Phariſees, how the Meſſiah could be at the ſame time the ſon of *David*, and his Lord; it muſt be obſerved, that he only propoſed it to them, to make them ſenſible of their ignorance, particularly in relation to the perſon of the Meſſiah, and to the nature of his kingdom; but that he would not explain it to them, becauſe they would not have comprehended nor believed what he ſhould have ſaid to them; and likewiſe becauſe it was not convenient to ſpeak openly of the glory and dignity of his perſon at that time: but this queſtion is very plain and obvious to us, who know that Jeſus Chriſt was the ſon of *David*, as man, ſince he was deſcended from that king; but that he is *David*'s Lord, and the Lord of all men, as he is the Son of God; God having placed him at his right hand, as king of the world, and of the church, with ſovereign authority over all things: let us therefore glory in our obedience and ſubjection to him.

CHAP. XXIII.

OUR Lord ſpeaks againſt the Phariſees and ſcribes. He owns all that is good and lawful in their doctrine, and in their miniſtry, but accuſes them of hypocriſy, and affecting a great appearance of holineſs. He ſays, they were filled with pride; that they rejected the goſpel themſelves, and hindered others from

from receiving it: he represents them as a ſet of covetous, wicked wretches, who made religion and prayer ſubſervient to their intereſt. He takes notice, that their doctrine about oaths was a proof of their impiety and deteſtable avarice; foraſmuch as they taught, that if a man ſwore by the gold, and by the gifts that were offered in the temple and upon the altar, the obligation upon his conſcience was ſtronger than if he had ſworn by the altar, or by the temple itſelf. He adds, that beſides the tithes preſcribed by the law, they gave tithes of herbs, and every thing that grew, which God had not commanded; and that, notwithſtanding this apparent ſtrictneſs, they neglected duties of much greater importance. He further adds, that though their external appearance was holy, their hearts were very corrupt; that they adorned the ſepulchres of the prophets, and at the ſame time perſecuted the ſervants of God unto death. Laſtly, He declares, that they drew upon themſelves, and the whole nation, the moſt dreadful judgments of God; and laments, in the moſt tender manner, the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which was to be brought to paſs in a few years.

Reflections.

IT may be obſerved upon this chapter in general, firſt, that our Lord drawing near his death, did, with a holy liberty, and with an authority nothing leſs than divine, rebuke the ſcribes and Phariſees for their wickedneſs and hypocriſy; it being very neceſſary he ſhould diſcover to the people what they were. Secondly, The repeated curſes denounced in this diſcourſe againſt hypocrites, ſhould make us look upon hypocriſy as a moſt odious ſin, eſpecially in thoſe who make great profeſſions of piety and zeal. The particular reflections we are to make upon this chapter, are, I. That when the miniſters of religion teach

found doctrine but lead ill lives, we must not imitate their actions, but ought, nevertheless, to hear and obey them when they preach the truth. II. That all the disciples of Jesus Christ, and particularly those to whom the care of the church is intrusted, ought to be wholly free from hypocrisy, ambition and covetousness, if they would not resemble those Pharisees whom our Lord cursed. III. That they themselves ought first to walk in the way that leads to heaven, and then make others walk in the same path, by contributing their utmost to the conversion of sinners, and to the edification of all men. IV. The censure which Christ passes upon the doctrine of the Pharisees, and upon the article of swearing, shews, that an oath ought to be held in great reverence, since we thereby appeal to God himself; that perjury, and the breach of vows, is a great sin. V. We here observe, that one of those tokens whereby hypocrites are known, is their affecting an outward holiness, being nice and scrupulous in things of little consequence, and neglecting the most important matters of religion; such as faith, mercy, and obedience to God's commands. Therefore we ought chiefly to apply ourselves to the observation of those most essential duties, to purify our hearts, and to settle in them faith and a true fear of God. Nevertheless, we are likewise taught by our Saviour, that although external duties be not the most necessary, yet we must not omit nor despise them; when he says, these things ought you to have done, and not leave the other undone. The threatnings which Christ denounces against the Jews, who, after having murdered the prophets, would put him to death likewise, shews, that God justly destroyed them, and that the ingratitude of such as reject the word of God and of his servants, will not remain unpunished. Lastly, The tenderness with which our Saviour deplores the ruin
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of the Jews, that had made ſuch ill returns to his goodneſs, proves very clearly that God only deſires the ſalvation of men; and that if there are any who periſh, it is wholly through their own fault.

CHAP. XXIV.

OUR Lord foretels the deſtruction of the temple of *Jeruſalem*; and being aſked by his diſciples when it would happen, and what ſigns ſhould precede that deſtruction, and the end of the world, anſwers them; that there ſhould ariſe falſe chriſts and falſe prophets; that there would be wars, famine, and calamities of all kinds; that his diſciples would be perſecuted, and that the goſpel would be preached in ſeveral parts of the world. He ſays, moreover, that when the abomination of deſolation ſhould come into the holy place, that is, when the idolators ſhould enter *Judea*, and beſiege *Jeruſalem* and the temple, this would be a ſign that its deſtruction was near; and that then people ſhould retire and flee away from the miſeries which would fall at that time upon the Jewiſh nation. To this our Lord adds, that the ſun and the ſtars ſhould be darkened; which are figurative expreſſions taken from the prophets, denoting the great revolutions that would happen in the world, and in the ſtate of the Jews, and the dreadful marks of God's wrath that would be ſeen by all. He ſays alſo, that the ſign of the ſon of man ſhould appear; which ſignifies, that Chriſt would manifeſt, in an illuſtrious and tranſcendent manner, by deſtroying the Jews and eſtabliſhing his kingdom, that he was the Son of God. He declares, that all theſe things ſhould come to paſs before that generation was paſſed away; that the exact time of his coming ſhould be known to none, but ſhould come ſuddenly upon them, as the flood did upon men in

the days of *Noah*. Lastly, He exhorts his disciples to watch, and be always ready, lest he should come upon them unawares.

Reflections.

WE must consider, in the first place, that all that Christ foretold here, concerning the destruction of *Jerusalem*, came to pass soon after his ascension. For there did arise several false messiahs and several impostors, who, under the pretence of religious zeal, seduced the Jews, and stirred up seditions through all *Judea*. There were likewise wars, in which an infinite number of the Jews were destroyed, and abundance of them carried off by famine and pestilence; the apostles and Christians were persecuted; the gospel was preached and established in several countries; the Romans entered *Judea*, besieged *Jerusalem*, and demolished it with its temple; and the Christians, making use of our Saviour's warning, retired from that city and were saved, whilst the Jews perished miserably. All this happened, as Jesus Christ had expresly declared it would, before that generation of men was gone, about forty years after his death: which is an unanswerable proof of the truth and divinity of these predictions, which were made known to the world long before the destruction of *Jerusalem*. We see, in the destruction of *Jerusalem*, a remarkable instance of the judgments of God upon unbelievers, as well as of his protection of the faithful. Finally, The exact completion of what our Lord foretold of the destruction of *Jerusalem*, ought to convince us, that what he has so expresly said of the end of the world, and of the final destruction of the wicked, will be fulfiled in like manner. The time of this second coming is concealed from us, as well as that of our own death, that we might be continually prepared for it,

and that terrible day may not surprise us, as the deluge did mankind in the time of *Noah*, nor as the Jews were surprised at the destruction of *Jerusalem*. Christ shews us himself, that this is the use we are to make of his whole discourse, by the similitude of the good and bad servant; and by the exhortation denoting the end of that similitude, and of all that is contained in this chapter: *Watch therefore, for you know not what hour your Lord doth come.*

CHAP. XXV.

OUR Lord, after speaking in the foregoing chapter of his coming, and exhorting his disciples to watchfulness, continues his discourse, and shews, I. By the parable of the ten virgins; and, II. By that of the talents, the necessity of watching, and of preparing for his coming. He afterwards speaks of the last judgment.

Reflections.

THE parable of the virgins is taken from the practice of the Jews at their weddings, at which their maidens were used to meet the bridegroom and bride with lighted lamps: and by this parable Christ gave his disciples to understand, that they were continually to expect and be prepared for his coming. The wise virgins represent the true believers, that live in faith, and in the practice of their duty, and in the expectation of our Lord's coming; and the foolish virgins represent the false christians, who neglect their duty. The coming of the bridegroom, at midnight, and the condition the wise and foolish virgins were in, signifies, that Christ will come to judge the world when he is least expected; and that then those that shall be found ready will be filled with joy, and with a holy confidence, and shall enter with

him into his glory; whilst, on the other hand, those who have neglected to prepare themselves, shall have for their portion nothing but misery and despair, and will in vain attempt to be admitted to the joys of the righteous. We may observe three things upon the parable of the talents: First, That God calls men to serve him, and that he grants his grace and his gifts to some more, to others less; that each of them may employ them according to his calling, and the measure he has received, to the glory of God and salvation of men. Secondly, That some, like the faithful servants, make a good use of these gifts and graces; and that others render them useless by their negligence. Thirdly, That God will oblige both to render an account of their behaviour; that he will praise and reward the fidelity of those that have employed his gifts in promoting his glory, and that those who have abused them, shall be punished for their unbelief. Our Lord expressly declares, that these last will be without excuse, because God is not a hard and unjust master, who would reap where he has not sowed; that is, he never requires of men more than they are able to perform. Thus, by each of these parables, Christ teaches us after what manner he will judge those men, to whom he has given the knowledge of himself: he warns us to adhere to our duty with constancy, and that each of us serve him in our respective vocations. There are four things principally to be observed in the description of the last judgment. The first is, that Jesus Christ will descend from heaven with glory, and that it is he who shall judge the world. Secondly, That all men shall appear before him, and all be judged by him, without exception. The third is, That he will judge them by their works, and that he will chiefly have respect to works of charity, and to the good that is done to his members; because such works are proofs

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and effects of faith, and of the love we have for him. The fourth thing is, that he will separate the good from the wicked, by receiving the good into the kingdom of heaven, and casting the wicked into eternal torments. Since Christ has so expressly warned us of all these things, and since we know that we must all appear before his tribunal, to receive according to the good or evil we have done, let us behave ourselves with godliness and fear during the time of our abode in this world; let us adhere to the practice of good works, and above all, to those of mercy and charity; that at the day of the last and glorious appearance of the Son of God, we may be free from that terror and despair which will then fall upon the wicked, and appear before him with joy and confidence, and be of the number of those to whom he shall say; *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

CHAP. XXVI. 1——35.

HERE begins the history of our Saviour's passion; I. The priests form a resolution to put Christ to death. II. A woman anoints our Lord with a precious oil. III *Judas* bargains with the priests to deliver up his master to them. And, IV. Christ celebrates the passover, and during that repast, he makes mention of the treachery of *Judas*; institutes the holy supper, and foretels that St *Peter* should deny him.

REFLECTIONS.

THE first reflection we have to make here, relates to the time of our Lord's passion; I. Jesus knowing he was to be crucified at the feast of the passover, repaired to *Jerusalem* at that time; and though

though the priests did not intend to put him to death during that festival, yet it was the will of God that he should then die, because it was the time of offering up the paschal lamb, which was the type of our Lord's sacrifice; and that the Jews, who came from all parts upon that account, might be witnesses of his death. II. The example of that woman, who anointed him with a precious perfume, should excite us to honour our Lord in the best manner we are able: and what our Lord says in defence of this action, shews us, that he accepts of what we do to testify our love and our respect for him: this ought likewise to induce us to judge favourably of other mens actions, especially when proceeding from a good principle; and never neglect to assist those that are in need and necessity. III. The agreement of *Judas* with the priests, is a proof what crimes, and what obdurateness avarice will lead men into, and how careful we ought to be, that that passion do not steal into and root itself in our hearts. IV. Let it be observed, that Jesus Christ foretold the treachery of *Judas*, to make him sensible his design was known to him, and that his disciples might confess, that nothing could befal him but what he had foreseen, and was contented to expose himself to. V. What especially deserves our attention in this chapter, is the Lord's supper, which our Saviour, just before his crucifixion, instituted to be a memorial of his death and sufferings to the end of the world: this obliges us to hold that sacrament in great reverence, and to celebrate it in a manner conformable to the design of our blessed Redeemer. VI. Christ's prediction, that St *Peter* should deny him, proves, that our Lord sees the heart, and knows things to come; and what he said to that apostle, who answered him with so much assurance, should teach us, never to presume upon our own strength,

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but to distrust ourselves, and be continually upon our guard against temptation.

CHAP. XXVI. 36——75.

IN this part of the history of the passion, we see, I. What our Lord suffered in the garden. II. How he was taken by *Judas.* III. What happened when he appeared before the council, and was condemned. IV. St *Peter*'s fall and repentance.

REFLECTIONS.

WE ought most seriously to reflect upon what Christ suffered in the garden, and especially the extream sorrow and terrors which he then felt. It was the will of God that he should undergo these things, that it might appear he died for the sins of mankind, and was subject to all the innocent infirmities of our nature. And we ought to judge, by the condition to which our Saviour was then reduced, how great the horror of sin is, and how dreadful the punishments are, which wicked men will one day suffer. Those humble and fervent prayers which Christ made to God in his agony, teach us to pray with perseverance and submission, when we are in affliction. The resignation of our Lord to the will of his Father, is a proof of his perfect obedience to him, and of his love towards us; and ought to be a pattern to us, in what condition soever he thinks fit to place us. The warning that Christ gave his apostles to watch and pray, lest they should sink under that great temptation to which they were going to be exposed, is a most wholsome advice, serving to teach us, that watchfulness and prayer are the principal means to resist temptation, and that we are overcome by it when we neglect those means.

means. In the manner in which *Judas* betrayed our Lord, we may see on one hand the treachery of that wretched disciple, and on the other, the readiness and chearfulness with which Christ exposed himself to death. The action of St *Peter*, who smote with his sword one of those who came to apprehend Christ, is to be considered as the effect of a rash zeal; and the rebuke that our Saviour gave that apostle, is a lesson to us never to avenge our ourselves, nor proceed to violence upon any occasion whatever. That which is to be observed upon the appearance of Christ before the council of the Jews is, I. That notwithstanding all the endeavours of the Jews to find out false witnesses, and some pretended reason for condemning him, he could not be convicted of any crime, and was only condemned for acknowledging himself to be the Son of God. In this we discover the malice and injustice of the Jews, and the entire innocence of our Saviour. II. The great patience with which he suffered all the injuries and affronts, and all the unjust treatment which he received from them, should cause us to remember what St *Peter* said upon this occasion: That *Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps*, 1 Peter ii. 21. III. What our Lord said to the Jews, when they condemned him to death, namely, that they should see him coming in the clouds of heaven, deserves a particular attention. Here we may observe Jesus Christ speaking as a king, and as the Son of God, at the very time of his condemnation: and the establishment of his kingdom, as well as the destruction of the Jews, did soon after verify what he had foretold upon that occasion. IV. The fall of St *Peter*, who, after having been warned by our Lord, and after having protested that he would never renounce him, did yet deny him three times, even with imprecations and oaths,

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is a sad instance of human inconstancy and frailty. By which we see, that even those who have good intentions, may greatly fall when they are not fortified against temptation; and that to secure ourselves from it, it behoves us to stand upon our guard and to suspect ourselves; to pray without ceasing; and to shun the places, and avoid the occasions that may draw us into sin. But we must likewise consider, that if the fall of St *Peter* was great, his repentance was speedy, and that he bitterly bewailed his fault. So we, when we happen to fall, ought to rise quickly, and atone for our sin by the tears of a sincere repentance, and by a true amendment of our lives.

CHAP. XXVII. 1—26.

I. *JUDAS* seeing that Christ was condemned, acknowledged his crime, and laid violent hands upon himself. II. Jesus appeared before *Pilate*, the governor of *Jerusalem*, who, after having made several attempts to deliver him, and to pacify the Jews, did at last pronounce the sentence of his condemnation.

REFLECTIONS.

THE remorse of conscience *Judas* felt, when he saw they were going to put Jesus to death, the confession he made of his crime, and his tragical end, shew the innocence of our Lord, and how unjustly he was condemned. It likewise discovers the state of a guilty conscience, and the horror of that remorse and despair wherewith the wicked are tormented when they become sensible of their crimes, and are pursued by divine vengeance. The use to which the Jews put the money that *Judas* returned them, served to perpetuate the memory of this event, as it was a proof of the injustice which they had

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committed, and as it was a plain accomplishment of the prophecy of *Zachariah*. As to what happened before *Pilate*, it must be observed, that Christ owned in his presence; as he had already done before the council, that he was the Messiah. Thus, in imitation of our Lord, we ought to confess the truth, even at the peril of our lives, as often as we are called to it. We see, moreover, in this history, the rage of the Jews, which nothing was capable of mollifying, and how they preferred a murderer and a seditious person before Jesus Christ; the innocence of our Lord may also be there observed, since it was acknowledged by *Pilate* himself; and particularly the iniquity of that judge, who, after a long opposition, did yield to his death at last, notwithstanding the warning he received from his wife; and though he was persuaded that he was condemning an innocent man. We have therefore an example in *Pilate* of those that sin against light, and that sacrifice their duty and their conscience to fear, complaisance and interest; as well as of those that think themselves guiltless when they are committing the greatest crimes, and that throw upon others the faults which they themselves are the authors of. This teaches us to adhere always inviolably to our duty, and to pursue with courage and steadiness the motions of our own conscience, without suffering any consideration whatever to turn us aside. Lastly, We ought most seriously to reflect upon these words of the Jews, when our Lord was condemned, *His blood be on us, and on our children.* Both they and their posterity have found the effects of this imprecation which they made against themselves; God having revenged the death of his Son upon that guilty nation, by the destruction of their city, and by that miserable condition in which they have remained ever since.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVII. 27—66.

ST *Matthew* here relates, I. The crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. II. The wonderful things that then happened. III. His burial.

REFLECTIONS.

AFTER having heard the relation of our Saviour's passion, and seen what contempt and pain he was exposed to before his crucifixion, and whilst he was upon the cross; we ought to consider, that he suffered all these things for the expiation of our sins, and to confirm, by his death, the promises he has made us of life everlasting. The use we are to make of this important passage of the gospel, is to consider that death as the wonderful means whereby God has saved us; to praise his mercy in delivering up his Son to death, and the love of our gracious Saviour in giving himself for us, and to love him as he has loved us. The sufferings of Christ ought likewise to make us renounce sin, since he died to destroy it; and teach us also to suffer, and to bear our cross with patience. The several prodigies that happened at his death, betoken the horror of the crime the Jews had then committed in crucifying him, and shew, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. The rending of the vail of the temple, visibly denotes, that the worship of the Jews was drawing to an end, and their temple going to be destroyed, and that heaven should thenceforwards be open to men. The opening of the sepulchres of those who rose with our Lord, denoted, that Jesus should come out of his tomb, and that the dead should rise at the last day, by the efficacy of his death and resurrection. With respect to the burial of our Lord, we may consider, that he was interred, that people might be more

more fully ſatisfied that he was really dead; and God was pleaſed he ſhould be put into a ſepulchre where none had yet lain, to ſhew, that it was he himſelf that aroſe from thence. The circumſtances of his burial, as well as thoſe of his paſſion, are the completion of ſeveral prophecies. And the belief that Chriſt was buried, is very proper to remove the horror which we ſhould otherwiſe have conceived of our own death and burial, and to fill us with the hope of the reſurrection and of a better life. Laſtly, The Jews cauſing our Lord's ſepulchre to be ſo ſtrictly cloſed and watched, is a thing worthy our notice, becauſe, contrary to their own intentions, they furniſh us thereby with undeniable proofs of his reſurrection.

CHAP. XXVIII.

THIS laſt chapter of the goſpel of St *Matthew* contains, I. A ſhort account of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt. II. What the Jews did to perſuade the people that his diſciples had taken away his body. III. Chriſt's appearing to the apoſtles, and the directions he gave them before he aſcended into heaven.

Reflections.

THERE are three principal reflections to be made upon the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt. I. That God's ſending his angels to take him out of the ſepulchre, as he had foretold, is an undeniable proof that he is the Son of God. II. That that reſurrection was a certain fact, atteſted by angels, and by the women that ſaw our Saviour, and afterwards by the apoſtles, and by a great number of other perſons. III. And above all, that the reſurrection is the foundation of our ſalvation, and of all our hopes, ſince we

we are thereby fully assured, that we are reconciled to God, and that we shall rise again at the last day. What the chief men among the Jews did to persuade the people that Christ's disciples had taken away his body, discovers the extreme malice and invincible obstinacy of his enemies; but all their precautions were vain, and what they feared did not fail to happen: thus God confounds the wicked in their designs, and makes truth triumph over all opposition. Lastly, What our Saviour said to his apostles, of the supreme power to which he was going to be exalted, the orders he gave them to preach and to baptise, and the promise he made of being with them to the end of the world, ought all to be seriously considered. Christ spoke then to his disciples, as Lord of heaven and earth, and shewed plainly that his doctrine was going to be spread over all the earth, that a great many people would embrace it and be baptised, and that his church should subsist for ever. The speedy and wonderful success of the preaching of the apostles, and the establishment of the Christian religion, proved afterwards, and does still prove the truth of these last words of our Lord; and they are so many powerful motives to induce us to believe in him, to confess the divinity of his doctrine, and to do all he has commanded us; particularly, to look upon baptism as a sacred institution of our Saviour, and to reverence that holy ceremony by which we are consecrated to the Father, Son, and holy Ghost.

The End of the Gospel according to St MATTHEW.

THE GOSPEL According to St MARK.

ARGUMENT.

This Gospel was writ some time after that of St Matthew, *it is thought, about ten years after Christ's ascension, by St* Mark, *under the inspection of the apostle St* Peter.

CHAP. I.

IN this chapter, St *Mark* gives a short account of *John* the baptist's preaching, the baptism of Jesus Christ, his temptation, his first preaching in *Galilee*, and the calling of his apostles. He afterwards relates the cure of a man possessed with an unclean spirit, of St *Peter*'s mother in law, and of several other sick and diseased, and lastly of a leper.

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

ST *Mark* shews us in the beginning of his gospel, I. That *John* the baptist was sent, as had been foretold of him by the prophets, to declare the manifestation of the kingdom of God, by preaching repentance, by baptising those that confessed their sins, and by warning the people that the Messiah was going to appear. God was pleased by the ministry of *John* to prepare the Jews for the reception of Jesus Christ, and to teach them that the kingdom of the Messiah would be a spiritual kingdom, and that he came to establish holiness in the world, and to turn men to God; so that we ought to look upon repentance and holiness of life, as the design of our Lord's coming: and this is what he himself has taught us, having begun his ministry by preaching repentance, as *John* the baptist his forerunner had done; saying, *Repent ye, and believe the gospel.* II What happened at the baptism of Jesus Christ, viz. the descending of the holy Ghost, and the voice which God caused to be heard from heaven, tended to convince *John* the baptist, and the people, that Jesus was the Son of God, whose doctrine all men were to receive with obedience and faith. It was likewise to shew, that he was really the Son of God, and to convince the devil of this truth, that God was pleased to suffer him to be tempted in the desart. III. The choice which our Lord made of some fishermen to be his apostles, shews that he came not to establish a temporal and worldly kingdom, since those people had nothing to distinguish themselves in this world: this likewise proves, that the wonderful effects of their ministry proceeded not from them, but that the whole glory is to be attributed to God alone. IV. Our Lord soon made himself known by miracles, which manifested not only his infinite power, but his

great goodneſs alſo. This method providence made choice of to prove to the Jews that he was ſent from God, and that his doctrine was true and divine; and to convince men ſtill more of this truth, was the reaſon why he worked his miracles, commonly, in favour only of ſuch who believed that he was able to do them, and who deſired it of him. He nevertheleſs took all the care he could, that thoſe miracles ſhould not make too great a noiſe: this he did upon prudential reaſons, leſt thoſe among the Jews that owned him for the Meſſiah, ſhould have raiſed commotions and tumults in order to declare him king, according to their notion at that time, that the Meſſiah ſhould be a temporal king; which might have occaſioned ſome diſturbance, and engaged the Romans to oppoſe the diſciples of Chriſt. Laſtly, When we read the account of all theſe miracles, we ſhould reflect, that ſince our Saviour is not leſs powerful, nor leſs gracious now, than he was when upon earth, he will grant us what is neceſſary to the healing or ſaving of our ſouls, more certainly than he formerly granted a cure to the diſeaſes of the body.

CHAP. II.

I. CHRIST cures a paralytical perſon. II. Calls *Levi*, which is St *Matthew*, to the office of an apoſtle. III. He gives his reaſons why he eat with ſinners, and why he did not oblige his diſciples to obſerve regular faſts, like thoſe of *John* the baptiſt, and of the Phariſees. IV. He returns an anſwer to the Phariſees, who blamed his apoſtles for plucking the ears of corn upon the ſabbath day.

Reflections.

THE firſt thing to be obſerved in the cure of the man that had the palſy is, the faith of thoſe who brought the man to Jeſus; who, when they ſaw they

they could not come near our Lord, let the sick man down through the roof of the house before Jesus; who, seeing this surprising instance of their faith, wrought for them the miracle which they believed he was able to perform. From whence it appears, how agreeable faith is to our Saviour, and how efficacious in obtaining from him the mercies we stand in need of. It appears also from hence, that besides the power of healing distempers, Christ had also an authority to forgive sins, which obliges us to consider him, not only as a prophet sent from God, but likewise as our judge, from whom we may expect health to our souls, and pardon of our offences through faith and repentance. II. We learn from this chapter, that our Lord came into the world to call sinners to repentance, which he gave us to understand by eating with publicans, and such other persons as the Jews looked upon to be great sinners. This doctrine ought to fill us with confidence, and at the same time make us acknowledge, that it is absolutely necessary to repent and amend our lives, if we would be saved. III. When it is said, that Christ did not oblige his disciples to regular fasts, such as those observed by the disciples of *John* the baptist, it must be understood in this manner, namely, that our Lord had particular reasons for not confining his disciples at that time to those kinds of fasts; because both he and his disciples were continually moving from place to place, and conversing with all kinds of people. He declared however, that his disciples should be called, after he was taken from them, not only to fastings but to great sufferings; and that if they were not yet exposed to them, it was because they were not able to bear them; just as a piece of new cloth would not suit with an old garment, and new wine would break old bottles. Therefore we must not conclude from this passage of the gospel, that

our Saviour condemned fasting and mortification; on the contrary, this doctrine evidently supposes, that our Lord calls his disciples to a mortified life, and to bear their cross. IV. We see, lastly, that Christ justifies the action of his disciples, who, being very hungry, plucked the ears of corn upon the sabbath day, upon which occasion he quoted what *David* did in a like case. This teaches us, that in extreme necessity, and when the external duties of religion cannot be observed without great inconvenience, they may be dispensed with; provided it be not out of contempt, and that we never violate the essentials of religion; it being nothing but hypocrisy and superstition, like that of the Pharisees, to act otherwise.

CHAP. III.

THE evangelist relates, I. The healing of a man whose hand was withered, and of several other diseased persons. II. The calling of the twelve apostles. III. What Christ said to the Pharisees, who ascribed his miracles to the power of the devil. IV. His declaration, that his true disciples were as dear to him as his own kindred.

REFLECTIONS.

I. WE may still observe the great goodness and sovereign power of our Lord, in the several miracles mentioned in this chapter, which is very proper to confirm our faith, and to fill us with confidence in him. We see, in particular, in the cure wrought upon the man whose hand was withered, the great blindness and malice of the Pharisees, who were offended at Christ's doing this upon the sabbath day. What he says to those enemies of his doctrine, and the just indignation he expressed, shews us, how much he is offended when we resist the truth,

and,

and, under a pretence of religion, condemn works of piety and charity. II. The choice our Lord made of the twelve apostles to be with him, and the power he gave them to preach the gospel, and to work miracles, like those done by himself, must be looked upon as an effect of his great wisdom, as well as of his goodness towards all men, since he was afterwards to make use of the ministry of those apostles, to cause the gospel to be preached throughout the world. III. The third reflection relates to the sin of the Pharisees, whom Christ accuses of blaspheming against the holy Ghost. St *Mark* clearly explains wherein this blasphemy consisted; which was, that seeing our Lord cast out devils, they said he did these miracles by the power of the devil; which was a most heinous instance of blasphemy against the holy Ghost, and the mark of an irrecoverable state of wickedness. This example proves, that when once men have abandoned themselves to their prejudices and passions, they are hardened against all that can be offered to them, though never so clear, and never so strong; and that instead of yielding to evidence, they become yet more wicked. IV. Our Lord's declaring that he loved his true disciples as much as his nearest relations, teaches us, that the surest means of being loved by him, is to set ourselves to hear his word, and to do his will; and that we likewise, in imitation of him, ought particularly to cherish those persons that fear God, and to esteem them above all others.

CHAP. IV.

THIS chapter contains, I. The parable of the seed, and its explanation. II. Another parable of seed cast into the earth, and at length producing its fruit. III. The parable of the grain of mustard. IV. Christ's miracle in laying the storm.

REFLECTIONS.

THE explanation which Jesus Christ himself has given of the similitude of the seed, sets it in a clear light, and expresses the meaning and use of it. This is what the Saviour of the world has thought fit to teach us by it: the seed that fell upon the way, represents those who hear the gospel, but do not receive it, nor are affected with it. The seed that fell upon rocky places, denotes those who receive the word of God only for a time, but in persecution and temptation forsake Christ. The seed that fell among thorns, and was thereby choked, is the image of those in whom the word would produce fruit, if their heart were not taken up with the love of the riches and pleasures of the world, and with the cares of this life. And the seed sown in good ground, represents those who have a good and well-disposed heart, and in whom the gospel produces good fruit. Now it is our duty to examine ourselves, and to try whether we are of the number of those hardened ones, upon whom the word of God makes no impression; or of those inconstant and cowardly ones, who, after having been affected, do not persevere; or of those carnal or worldly ones, in whom the word is rendered unprofitable, by the love of the riches and pleasures of this life; or, lastly, of those faithful hearers, who bring forth in abundance the fruit which God expects from them. Let these divine instructions take root in our heart, and, as Christ himself has exhorted us, let us take heed how we receive them, always remembering, that God gives more light and greater gifts to those that make a right use of them; but that he takes them away from such as abuse them, or that do not improve them. The design of our Lord in the similitude of the seed springing up, and growing by little and little; and in the other,

of

of a grain of muſtard, was to ſhew, that notwithſtanding there was no great appearance at that time that his doctrine ſhould make any conſiderable progreſs, by reaſon of his own low eſtate, and the ſmall number of thoſe who received his doctrine, yet it would ſoon be ſpread throughout the whole earth. Chriſt expreſſed theſe things in parables, becauſe he would not then declare openly that his goſpel was to be preached to other nations, for fear of ſhocking and giving offence to the Jews: but theſe parables became very obvious and plain afterwards, by the eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian religion, ſo that they do now furniſh us with invincible proofs of the truth of the goſpel. In the hiſtory of the miracle which our Saviour wrought by calming a tempeſt, we may obſerve the great concern of the apoſtles, who were afraid of periſhing, though Jeſus was in the midſt of them; which ſhewed that their faith was ſtill weak, as he himſelf reproached them. We may likewiſe diſcover therein his goodneſs towards them, and that wonderful power which turned their fear into aſtoniſhment and admiration. The children of God are expoſed to many dangers, to many fears and infirmities, but he helpeth them, and after he has tried them by affliction, gives ſuch proofs of his goodneſs in their deliverance, as may ſtrengthen their faith, and fill them with joy and conſolation.

CHAP. V.

I. THE evangeliſt relates a moſt remarkable miracle which our Saviour wrought, by delivering a man poſſeſſed with a legion of devils. II. The healing of a woman that had an iſſue of blood, and the raiſing the daughter of *Jairus* from the dead.

REFLEC-

Reflections.

THE hiſtory of the poſſeſſed with devils, does very much deſerve our attention. We may obſerve here a moſt evident proof of the power which the devils exerciſed at that time, by God's permiſſion, over mankind; but we ſee likewiſe, that Chriſt had a ſovereign authority over them; that he came to deſtroy the kingdom of the devil, and that he was always ready to diſplay his power in favour of ſuch as wanted his aſſiſtance. Our Lord, after having delivered this demoniack, gave the devils leave to enter into the ſwine, and to hurry them headlong into the ſea, that it might appear that this man was really poſſeſſed, and to prove the truth and greatneſs of the miracle which he had wrought; it was likewiſe to ſhew, that the devils could do nothing but by his permiſſion; and as a trial and a chaſtiſement of the inhabitants of thoſe parts, who, as the hiſtory informs us, would not bear our Saviour among them. This obliges us to thank God, that ſince the coming of Jeſus Chriſt, the devil has not the ſame power as he had formerly over mankind; and to conſider, that as ſad and deplorable as the condition of this demoniack was, yet it was by no means ſo dreadful as that of ſinners who abandon themſelves to evil, and who are ſlaves to the devil and their own paſſions; ſince this man did not fall into this ſorrowful condition by his own fault, and that beſides, the devil could only hurt his body, whereas ſinners do, of their own accord, become his ſlaves, by performing his will; by which means, this enemy of God and man draws their ſouls into the abyſs of everlaſting deſtruction. The example of that woman, whoſe faith our Lord commends, and who was healed by touching the hem of his garment, proves that humility and faith have a great efficacy, that truſt in Jeſus Chriſt is never vain,

and

and that he is always ready to extend his favours to those that apply themselves to him with such dispositions. The great power of our Lord appears yet with more lustre, in the resurrection of the daughter of *Jairus*; of which it must be observed, that Christ did not only heal the sick, but that he likewise restored life to the dead; whereby he did both display his infinite power, and confirm the promises which he has made of raising us up at the last day. Thus the consideration of this miracle is of very great efficacy to produce in us a firm hope of immortality, to fill us with comfort in the expectation of it, and to encourage us more and more to the study and practice of piety and good works; that we may one day partake of that blessed resurrection which Christ has promised.

CHAP. VI. 1—29.

WE have here an account, I. Of our Saviour's arrival at *Nazareth*, and of the unbelief of the inhabitants of that town. II. Of the mission of the twelve apostles into *Judea*. III. Of the death of *John* the baptist.

REFLECTIONS.

THESE are the reflections which we ought to make upon the three forementioned heads: I. The first relates to the unbelief and ingratitude of the people of *Nazareth*, who being so happy as to have our Saviour among them, did not acknowledge that the wisdom and power which were in him proceeded from God, and made so ill a use of his presence, which was the reason that he wrought few miracles in that place. Thus the prejudices and wickedness of men make them neglect the greatest advantages, at the time when they are offered to them; it likewise

shews, that if God deprives them of his grace, it is because they are so little sensible of it, and because they put obstacles in their own way. Upon the mission of the apostles it must be observed, 1. That Jesus Christ, in his wisdom and goodness towards the Jews, sent the apostles throughout *Judea*, to declare the coming of the kingdom of God; and to render their preaching more effectual, he gave them the power of doing miracles. 2. He forbad them to make any provision for that journey, because it was to be short, and to inure them early to rely upon providence. 3. He declared, that those who would not receive them, should be punished most severely; whereby we see the condemnation of those to whom God offers salvation, and who reject the proffers of his mercy. As to the death of *John* the baptist, it was owing to the hatred that *Herodias* bore him, because he condemned her marriage with *Herod*; and to the base compliance of that prince, who sacrificed *John* the baptist, for whom he had otherwise a veneration, looking upon him as a holy and just man, to the resentment of that impudent woman. In this event we perceive, that vicious persons commonly hate those who reprove them for their disorderly lives; and that very great evils spring from impurity, as well as from the compliance which people shew for the wicked, and from rash oaths. It is nevertheless to be noted, that it pleased God to suffer *John* the baptist to lose his life after this manner, that the Jews might be prepared for that which was to befal our Lord, of whom this holy prophet was the forerunner. It is likewise a thing worthy of attention, that *Herod*, who was of the sect of the Sadducees, who did not believe a resurrection, should imagine that *John* the baptist, who had been beheaded by his order, was come to life again; this shews that the wicked and unbelievers have no fixed or settled notions;

tions; that a guilty conſcience is always in fear, and that wicked men, in the horror of their remorſe, acknowledge truths which they before denied, and which are contrary to their avowed ſentiments.

CHAP. VI. 30——56.

I. OUR Lord feeds five thouſand people after a miraculous manner. II. His diſciples being expoſed to a ſtorm, he goes to them walking upon the ſea. III. He cures many diſeaſes after he arrived at the country of *Genezareth*.

REFLECTIONS.

WE are here to obſerve in the firſt place the goodneſs of our Lord, who, ſeeing the condition of the people that followed him, was moved with compaſſion towards them; and beſtowed upon them, beſides ſpiritual food for their ſouls, nouriſhment alſo for their bodies, by a wonderful multiplication of the loaves. There is one circumſtance which particularly diſtinguiſhes this miracle from the reſt: which is, that this miracle was wrought in behalf of a great multitude, whereas the reſt were of a private nature; which muſt make this the more remarkable. He afterwards manifeſted the ſame goodneſs as well as power, when his diſciples being in danger of periſhing by a tempeſt, he went to them walking upon the ſea, and made the ſtorm to ceaſe. This new miracle it ſeems was neceſſary more fully to convince his diſciples of his power; ſince, as the evangeliſt remarks, they had not ſufficiently attended to his former miracles. Thus our Lord was pleaſed to confirm their faith, which was ſtill weak, and convince them more and more that he was the Son of God. What happened on this occaſion, ſhould produce in us a firm belief of the unbounded power

of Christ, and of the care he takes of his servants; there being no danger which he cannot deliver them from, no affliction which has not in the end an happy issue, which makes dangers and afflictions the greatest proofs of his love. Finally, When we read that they brought to Christ from all parts the sick and diseased, and that they were all healed, even by the bare touch of his garment; we ought to believe, that if he thus displayed his power for the comfort and cure of those that were presented to him, he is not less disposed to save all such as seek from him the cure of their souls; and this should encourage us to have recourse with confidence to our gracious Redeemer, to be assisted by him in all our wants.

CHAP. VII.

THIS chapter has two parts: I. The Pharisees complaining that the disciples of Christ did not wash themselves according to the custom of the Jews, he reproaches them for violating the commandments of God, by teaching, that if a child had consecrated and devoted to God that substance wherewith he might have assisted his father and mother, he was obliged strictly to fulfil such a vow, nor was any longer at liberty with that substance to relieve his parents in their wants. He afterwards teaches the people and his disciples what it was that defiled a man, and what did not defile him. II. After this he goes to the coasts of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, and there heals the daughter of a *Canaanitish* woman; and returning into *Galilee*, he heals a man that was deaf and dumb.

REFLECTIONS.

WE may learn from hence, I. That it is hypocrisy scrupulously to practise ceremonies and customs established by men, and to violate the divine laws

laws and duties which God has more exprefsly commanded; that the true fervice of God confifts in keeping his commandments, but that he abhors the worfhip of hypocrites, who pretend to honour him with their mouths, and with the outfide of religion, whilft their heart is defiled and far from him. II. This difcourfe of our Saviour teaches us, that it is the will of God that children fhould honour and affift their parents, and that nothing can excufe them from this duty. III. That thofe oaths and vows, whereby people oblige themfelves to do things contrary to the law of God, do not bind the confcience; and that it would be a fin to perform them. But above all, Chrift teaches us, IV. That what defiles us before God, is properly that which proceeds from the heart, fuch as evil thoughts, impure and unjuft defires; the hatred of our neighbour; envy, pride and haughtinefs; and other paffions of the like nature: that thefe evil thoughts are real fins, being the fource of all the wicked actions that men commit. When Chrift gave thefe inftructions, he faid, *Hear and underftand*. This advice denotes the importance of this doctrine, and obliges us above all things to avoid that which defiles the foul, and to acquire true purity which is that of the heart. On the fecond part of this chapter it muft be obferved, that our Lord being defired by a woman that was a Gentile to heal her daughter, refufed at firft to grant her requeft, telling her, it was not fit to give the childrens bread to dogs; that is, to work thofe miracles in favour of the Gentiles, who are ftrangers, which Chrift only did for the fake of the Jews, that were the people of God, and as it were the children of his family. Our Lord faid this, becaufe the Gentiles were not yet to be made equal to the Jews. But that woman obtained at laft from him, by her profound humility, perfeverance, faith and zeal, the favour which fhe defired of him. We

may see by this history, that the heathens were not excluded from the grace of God, and that they were to be soon received into it, as well as the Jews. We see likewise that prayers, attended with humility and zeal, have great efficacy; that if they do not obtain for us at first all that we desire of God, he deals thus with us, to stir us up, and to give us more lively sentiments of our own unworthiness, but that at last we obtain every thing of him by perseverance. Finally, We discover in this and the other miracle of healing the deaf and dumb man, the facility and supreme authority wherewith Christ cured all sorts of diseases, and that great charity which induced him, upon all occasions, to comfort and assist the miserable, and to do good to all.

CHAP. VIII. 1——21.

I. CHRIST feeds miraculously four thousand men. II. He refuses to give a sign, which the Pharisees required of him. And, III. Warns his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of *Herod.*

REFLECTIONS.

I. WE are here to admire the wonderful and gracious manner in which our Lord fed several thousand men with seven loaves and a few fishes, as he had done a little before; whereby he was pleased not only to provide for the nourishment of their bodies, but likewise to dispose them to receive from him the true food, which is that of the soul. Further, The great multitude for whom our Lord multiplied the loves and fishes, and the broken pieces that remained, with which the apostles filled seven baskets, are two circumstances which served to confirm the certainty of the miracle, and make it known.

known. II. We see that the Pharisees having desired our Saviour to shew them a sign from heaven, he would not gratify them in it. His using them in that manner was very just, since having already done so many other miracles, which they had made no advantage of, such a sign could have been of no use to them, nor would they have been affected with it. God, who answers the desires of the sincere and honest heart, justly forsakes those who resist the truth; and when he has done enough to convince men, he is not bound to do any more; and it would be in vain for him to employ new means to convince men whose blindness is voluntary, and the effect of their wickedness. III. The apostles having forgot to take bread, our Lord warns them against the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of *Herod*, who was of the sect of the Sadducees; this was as much as to say, that they should beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees, who were hypocrites, and only adhered to the traditions and externals of religion; and the impious opinions of the Sadducees, that denied the resurrection, and maintained other pernicious errors. Thus did this divine Saviour, in his great wisdom, take occasion from ordinary occurrences to give his disciples wholsome lessons of instruction. What he says at this time teaches us to avoid, with the utmost care, all kind of false doctrines and dangerous notions, and especially such as may lead us into superstition and hypocrisy; or into irreligion and infidelity.

CHAP. VIII. 22——38.

I. CHRIST cures a blind man. II. He asks his disciples what opinion the people had of him, and what they themselves thought of him; whereupon St *Peter* confessed him to be the Son of God. III. Our Lord foretels his death. IV. He exhorts

his disciples to be prepared for sufferings, and to make an open profession of the gospel before men; and to engage them to it, he shews them that it was the only means to avoid the loss of their souls.

Reflections.

I. IN the healing of the blind man there is this particular observable, viz. That our Lord did not heal him all at once, but did it by degrees. He proceeded in that manner to try his faith, which was not perhaps strong enough; to demonstrate his power to him in a more sensible manner by the progress of his cure, and to let the people see, that in not working his miracles after the same manner always, he could display the divine power that was in him, either all at once, or by little and little; which shews that he was able to work miracles as he thought convenient. II. We see in the second place, that Christ was esteemed among the Jews as a great prophet, but that St *Peter* and the other apostles looked upon him as the Son of God. This is likewise what all of us ought to believe in our heart, and confess with our mouth, if we would be saved. Nevertheless, our Lord forbids his disciples to publish that he was the Messiah, because he was not to take upon him openly that character before his death. III. Upon the prediction which Christ made of his own death, it is to be observed, that he warned his disciples of it, that they might be prepared gradually for that great event which they did not expect, and which might otherwise have staggered their faith. It was to make them understand the necessity of this, that he so severely rebuked St *Peter*, who, being possessed with the Jewish prejudices, could not conceive that the Messiah, the Son of God, was to die. But what this apostle could not comprehend at that time, is plain to us, who know that the death of Christ is the means

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that God has been pleased to use for our redemption. IV. And lastly, Christ has taught us, that those who would be his disciples must deny themselves, and be prepared to suffer, and even to die for the gospel, if thereunto called; that there is nothing of so great importance to us, as the saving our souls; and that we ought to make an open profession of godliness and truth, if we would have him own us for his true disciples, and if we desire to be received into his glory when he comes to judge the world. Thus did Jesus Christ instruct men in the most important duties of religion, and set before them the most powerful motives to engage them to the practice of them.

CHAP. IX. 1—29.

THIS part of the ninth chapter contains three things: I. The transfiguration of Jesus Christ. II. The explanation which he gave his disciples of the prediction of the coming of *Elias*. III. The healing of the lunatic, whom the apostles could not cure.

REFLECTIONS.

I. OUR Lord shewed to three of his apostles the glory of his transfiguration, that he might fully convince them by this glorious appearance that he was the Son of God, and also to strengthen their faith, which was like to be shaken in a short time by his death. The appearing of *Moses* and *Elias* on this occasion shewed, that Jesus was that great Redeemer whose coming the prophets had foretold, and that he far excelled the greatest of the prophets, among whom *Moses* and *Elias* were the chief. Besides this, God declared by a voice from heaven, that Jesus Christ was his beloved Son. The voice which God

caused to be heard from heaven upon that occasion, teaches us, that our Lord is that great prophet whom all men are bound to hear and to obey. This transfiguration of Christ is also an image of the glory wherein he shall appear at the last day; and the presence of *Moses* and *Elias* proves, that those holy men lived after their departure out of this world, and that there is a state of happiness reserved for the righteous after this life. II. Our Lord informed his disciples on this occasion, that *John* the baptist is that *Elias* who was to come, according to the prophesy of *Malachi*. The name of *Elias* was given to the forerunner of the Messiah, because, like that prophet, he was to reform the manners of men, and to establish the service of God. The honourable mention our Saviour makes of *John* the baptist, obliges us to acknowledge the dignity of the person of that great prophet, to reflect seriously upon the design of his ministry, and to submit to his doctrine, as well as that of Jesus Christ, who is still greater than his forerunner. III. In the cure of the lunatic, whom the apostles could not cure, because they were not sufficiently persuaded that they were able to work that miracle in the name of Jesus Christ, we may remark, that the faith of the apostles was as yet very weak; but that our Lord seeing the deplorable condition of the young man, and having respect to the faith and tears of his father, healed him perfectly, and that only by a word. What Christ said to his apostles on this occasion shews us, that the power of working miracles was to be obtained of God by faith, prayer and fasting. These means being not less necessary to resist temptation, and to procure us the all-powerful assistance of God's grace, we ought carefully to practise them.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX. 30—51.

I. OUR Lord warns his diſciples of his approaching death. II. He reproves their diſputing who ſhould be the greateſt in the kingdom of the Meſſiah, and teaches them humility, by placing a little child in the midſt of them. III. He blames St *John* and his other diſciples for oppoſing a man who caſt out devils in his name; told them that they ought not to offend nor diſcourage any of thoſe that believe in him. IV. He exhorts them to avoid every thing that might be a ſcandal, or an occaſion of falling, either to themſelves or others; threatning ſuch as do not avoid thus giving offence, with the pains of hell: he repreſents to them, that being the ſalt of the earth, they ought to endeavour after the improvement and edification of all men, particularly taking care to diſcourage no one, to entertain ſentiments of charity towards all, and to live together in peace and unity.

Reflections.

WE muſt conſider, I. That if the apoſtles did not comprehend what our Lord ſaid concerning his death, it was becauſe they could not conceive how the Meſſiah ſhould die and ſuffer in a cruel and ignominious manner. II. The diſpute that aroſe among them who ſhould be the greateſt in the kingdom of the Meſſiah, was owing to the opinion they had entertained that his kingdom ſhould be a temporal kingdom, and like the kingdoms of this world. Chriſt undeceived them by ſetting before them a little child; the deſign of which was, to inſpire them with humble ſentiments, and to teach them not to affect the pre-eminence over each other, nor to deſpiſe any one. This leſſon concerns all Chriſtians, who ought to baniſh from their hearts all proud and

haughty thoughts, and to become like children in meekneſs, innocence and humility. III. It is to be obſerved, that our Lord reproves his diſciples, becauſe they would have hindered a man who did not follow them, from caſting out devils in the name of Jeſus Chriſt. From whence we ought to learn, not to reject any who profeſs to love the Lord Jeſus, and to believe him; but on the contrary, to look upon them as brethren, to cheriſh them, and join ourſelves to them. This is what he ſhews yet more expreſsly when he ſays, that it is a very great ſin to deſpiſe or offend any of his diſciples, even though they ſhould betray ſome weakneſs, or might appear contemptible to the world. Laſtly, Our Saviour earneſtly exhorts us, and with the ſevereſt threatnings, to reſiſt every thing that may draw us into ſin, reſolutely to renounce whatever is moſt dear to us, to mortify our inclinations, and even to undergo the greateſt troubles, rather than to fall ourſelves, or to make others fall into ſin, and thereby expoſe ourſelves and them to be caſt into hell, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.

CHAP. X. 1—31.

CHRIST does three things: I. He anſwers the Phariſees, who queſtioned with him about divorces, and told them, that the cuſtom which prevailed among the Jews, of putting away their wives for every cauſe, was contrary to the inſtitution of marriage. II. He bleſſes young children. III. He anſwers a rich young man who had aſked him what he muſt do to be ſaved; upon which occaſion he ſays, that riches would hinder many people from believing in him; but that he would abundantly reward thoſe that ſhould forſake their goods, and all that was deareſt to them, to follow him.

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS.

WE may make this general observation upon what our Saviour says about marriage: That divorce, as practised by the Jews, was an irregularity which God did not approve, but which however was tolerated, because of the carnal humour of that people, and of their natural inclination to disobedience; but that these divorces ought not to be suffered among Christians, no more than several other things of a like nature which God bore with formerly; that the laws of marriage are inviolable, that they equally bind the man and the woman, and therefore the Son of God having settled the laws of marriage again upon the same foot they were at the beginning, nothing but adultery can justify a divorce, and the liberty of marrying again. The ceremony of imposition of hands, which Christ practised with respect to little children, and the prayer he made for them, convinces us that children are dear to him; that it is a practice very agreeable to his will to dedicate them to God by baptism and prayer; and that the kingdom of heaven is reserved for those only who, like children, are meek and innocent, and untainted with the love of the world or any of its vanities. We may learn from what passed between Christ and the rich young man, that to enter into eternal life, we must keep the commandments of God; and that besides, we ought on some occasions to forsake all that we possess in this world; and that in general, Christians ought not to set their hearts upon riches; and that if God bestows them upon us, we should employ them to charitable purposes. We gather moreover from the discourse of our Lord, that this renunciation of worldly goods, as hard as it may seem at first, it not impossible, no more than our other duties; and that those who have thus renounced the

the good things of this life, as the apoſtles did formerly, ſhall be abundantly rewarded, both here and hereafter. Laſtly, The example of this young man, who had ſomething of good in him, and for which Chriſt loved him, but who was diſcouraged when our Saviour told him, that he muſt diſpoſe of his goods, ſhews, that it may happen, that people who have good intentions, and ſome good qualities, may, nevertheleſs, fail of ſalvation, if they have not courage enough to do all that it is required of them, in order to obtain it; if they will not renounce certain ruling paſſions, which obſtruct their ſalvation, particularly the love of riches, and a fondneſs for the things of this world.

CHAP. X. 32——53.

I. OUR Lord warns his diſciples of his death and reſurrection. II. Returns an anſwer to *James* and *John*, who fancying, like the reſt of the Jews, that the Meſſiah was to have a glorious reign upon earth, begged of him the chief dignities in his kingdom. III. He reſtores ſight to a blind man near *Jericho*.

Reflections.

WE may conſider here in the firſt place, that the time of Chriſt's death drawing nigh, he revealed more plainly to his apoſtles that he was to be crucified, and to riſe again; but they were troubled and amazed at this diſcourſe, becauſe they expected to ſee their Maſter reign on earth with glory. In this we diſcover on one hand the wiſdom and goodneſs of our Lord, who was pleaſed thus to prepare his diſciples for that which was to befal him; and on the other hand, that thoſe diſciples did ſtill labour under great prejudices; and that they knew not yet what

what he was to do to save mankind. In the next place, we must attend to what Christ said to St *James* and St *John*, who thought of being highly distinguished in his kingdom, that instead of expecting to be raised to great dignities, they should be prepared to drink of the same cup, and to be baptised with the same baptism as he was; that is to say, to pass through very great sufferings, and even submit to death itself; and that therefore they ought to be humbled, and to become the servants of one another, after the example of their Lord, who came into the world only to serve and to suffer. These lessons, and this great example of humility, concern us as well as the apostles; and we ought to set them continually before us, as the rule of our sentiments, and of our behaviour. Lastly, The cure which our Lord granted to the blind man, who implored his assistance with so much fervency, is a fresh proof of his power and goodness; and we may infer from it, that if he was so ready to assist the unfortunate, he is yet more disposed to save all such as call upon him with humility, and that seek of him eternal life.

CHAP. XI.

I. JESUS CHRIST makes his royal entry into *Jerusalem*. II. He drives out of the temple those that profaned it by selling doves and other creatures for the sacrifices, and by changing of money. III. He causes the fig-tree to wither by his word. And, IV. He answers the Pharisees who required an account of his authority.

REFLECTIONS.

I. IT is to be observed, that our Lord made his royal entry into *Jerusalem* a few days before his death, to shew, that he was that glorious King, that

that Redeemer whose coming the prophets had foretold, but which he avoided to declare publicly during his life. But the manner wherein he made this entry, riding upon a young ass, shewed his meekness and humility; and was a token that his kingdom no way resembled the kingdoms of this world. Now as we do much better understand the glory of Jesus Christ, and the nature of his kingdom, than the people who attended him on that solemn occasion, we are the more engaged to rejoice and praise God, for having sent us this great Saviour, and for the manifestation of his kingdom. II. It must be observed, that the same day on which Christ made his royal entry, he went to the temple and drove out those that profaned it, to make the Jews sensible of his divine authority; and, by acting thus as master in the temple, to shew that he was the Son of God. It is likewise a warning to us not to profane, either by hypocrisy, impiety or irreverence, the places where God is worshipped and called upon. As for the miracle of the withered fig-tree, we must know this tree was of a particular kind, one of those fig-trees which preserved all the winter their leaves and their figs, and whose fruit grew ripe in spring. Jesus therefore seeing this fig-tree which had leaves, and which might have had figs too, went to seek fruit thereon, though it was not the season for common figs; this he did that he might take occasion, by this miracle, to make it wither, and to shew his disciples, that faith and prayer obtain all things from God; but he expressly warns us, that prayer must be made in the spirit of love, and that when we offer up our prayers to God, we should previously forgive one another. The answer our Lord returned to the Pharisees, who asked him whence he had his authority, was to convince them that their blindness and unbelief were wilful, and that his authority proceeded from heaven, as

well as that of *John* the baptist; but we should be yet more guilty than those Pharisees, if, knowing that *John* the baptist and Jesus Christ were sent from God, and professing to believe the same, we should not submit to the doctrine which they preached, and above all, to the authority of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAP. XII. 1—27.

I. CHRIST proposes the parable of the husbandmen. II. Answers the question that was put to him about paying tribute to the emperor. And, III. Another question which the Sadducees asked him about the resurrection.

REFLECTIONS.

THE meaning of the parable of the husbandmen is, that the Jews, after having rejected and persecuted the prophets, would put to death the Son of God, for which reason God would take away his covenant from them, and destroy them; that he would cause the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles, and that Christ, who had been rejected by the chief among the Jews, should become the head and king of the church, and be exalted to the right hand of God. Two reflections may be made upon this parable: The first is, That all that Jesus had foretold, was fulfilled soon after by the destruction of Jerusalem, by the calling of the Gentiles, and by the establishment of the kingdom of our Lord. The second, That as God severely punished the ingratitude of the Jews, he will more severely punish the infidelity of those who, living under the gospel, despise the offers of his grace, and disobey his laws. We may see by the answer that Christ made concerning the tribute, that he discovered the snare which the Pharisees

Pharisees laid for him, and avoided it, by telling them to *render unto Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.* From hence we should gather that we are bound to submit to the authority of kings and princes, and to yield them all that is due to them; and likewise to acquit ourselves inviolably of those duties which we are bound by our religion to pay to God. Our Lord had at that time a remarkable dispute with the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the dead. The question they put to him upon this subject he answered in such a manner as confounded them, and proved them to be in a great error. This passage is well worth our attention: in it Christ teaches us the certainty of the resurrection, and the state of those that shall rise again; which ought to strengthen us in the belief of this great and comfortable truth, and induce us to imitate the faith and piety of the patriarchs, since the Lord has declared himself to be their God, even after their death; and it should likewise teach us to live after a pure and spiritual manner, that we may partake of the glory of a happy resurrection.

CHAP. XII. 28——44.

I. CHRIST answers one of the scribes who asked him which was the greatest commandment. II. He asks the Pharisees, how the Messiah could be at the same time the Son and Lord of *David.* III. He condemns the hypocrisy of the scribes. IV. He praises the offering of a poor widow.

Reflections.

I. WE have here a very important lesson, namely, that the chief commandment, and that which includes all the rest, is to love God with all our heart, and to love our neighbour as ourselves; that this

this is most acceptable to God, and worth more than all the ceremonies, and all the external duties of religion. Those who rightly understand this truth, and labour, above all things, to fix in their hearts this love of God, and of their neighbour, are in a fit disposition to enter into the kingdom of heaven, as our Lord has expressly declared. II. Our Lord asking the Pharisees, How *David* could call the Messiah his Lord, in the CXth psalm, since he was his Son; they were put to silence and could not answer him a word. By this question, he was minded to make them sensible of their ignorance, but would not explain the difficulty, because they would not have believed what he said to them, and because he would not then speak openly of the dignity of his person; but this question has nothing obscure in it with respect to us, since we know Christ is the son of *David*, because, as man, he descended from him; but that he was his Lord, as the Son of God. III. The reproaches Christ cast upon the scribes shew us, that pride, hypocrisy and covetousness, are most odious vices, especially in those that teach others, and make great professions of piety. IV. The judgment which our Lord passed upon the offering of a poor widow, that cast two little pieces of money into a chest, where they kept that which was given for the use of the temple, and for divine service, is a proof that God does chiefly regard the heart and intention; and that the contributions and alms of poor people, though they are of little value, are as well received as those of the rich, when the poor give as much as their poverty will allow them, and when they do it out of a principle of piety and charity.

CHAP. XIII.

CHRIST ſpeaks of the ſigns that were to precede the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the end of the world. He ſays there would ariſe falſe prophets, and falſe meſſiahs; that there would be wars, famines, and all ſort of calamities; that his diſciples would be perſecuted, and the goſpel preached throughout the world. He foretels them that the idolators ſhould ſoon enter into *Judea*, and beſiege *Jeruſalem*; that there would appear every where tokens of the wrath of God; that then the Son of man would manifeſt himſelf in his glory; and that theſe things ſhould happen before that generation paſſed away. He exhorts his diſciples to depart from *Jeruſalem* at that time, to hold themſelves ready, and to watch for his coming; and to induce them ſo to do, ſays, that the exact time of his coming was uncertain.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS diſcourſe of the Son of God offers to our mind three principal reflections. I. That the event did fully verify all theſe predictions of our Lord, ſoon after his departure out of this world, foraſmuch as ſeveral deceivers or impoſtors appeared at that time; the Jews were afflicted with war, and ſcourges of every kind; the apoſtles and Chriſtians were perſecuted; the goſpel ſpread in ſeveral parts of the world; *Jeruſalem* beſieged and deſtroyed by the Romans, and the Chriſtians that came out of it preſerved from that deſolation; and laſtly, that all theſe things happened before all the men that lived in Chriſt's time were dead, as he had poſitively foretold. All theſe are ſo many undeniable proofs of the truth and divinity of the goſpel, and viſible tokens of the divine

vengeance

vengeance upon the Jews. II. This ought to convince us, that what Christ said no less positively about his last coming, about the end of the world, the universal judgment, and the punishment of wicked men, shall not fail to come to pass. III. The third reflection is, that the time of this coming is unknown to us, as well as the time of our own death, God having concealed it from us in his wisdom and goodness; that therefore we ought to think upon it continually, and to prepare ourselves for it by prayer, by a holy life, and by the practice of every good work, serving God faithfully every one in his calling, that we be not surprised by that terrible day. This is what our Lord himself exhorts us to, in these words, at the end of this discourse, which shew too the use and design of it: *Take heed to yourselves, watch and pray, for you know not when your Lord will come; and what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.*

CHAP. XIV. 1—31.

ST *Mark* begins here the history of our Saviour's passion, and relates, I. How a woman anointed him with a precious oil. II. How *Judas* promised the Jews to betray his Master to them. III. The celebration of the passover the evening before his death; and, how, during supper, he foretold the treachery of *Judas*, and St *Peter*'s denial of him, and the institution of the Lord's supper.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THE first reflection to be made relates to the action of that woman, who poured on Jesus a precious ointment. Since Christ approved of that action, commended her zeal and good intentions, and declared, that the remembrance of it should be perpetuated in the church, we cannot but doubt he

will

will likewiſe approve all that we ſhall do for his honour; his reply to thoſe who would have had that ointment ſold, and the money given to the poor, teaches us to avoid raſh judgments, and not to blame too haſtily the actions of other people, when they may proceed from a good principle; and that we ought to take care of the poor, and embrace every opportunity of doing good to them. II. The example of *Judas* ſhews, that covetouſneſs blinds and hardens men to ſuch a degree, that it puts them upon committing all ſort of crimes. III. Since Chriſt foretold the treachery of *Judas*, it appeared from thence, that nothing was concealed from him; that he knew the hearts and deſigns of men; that he foreſaw what was to happen to himſelf, and conſequently that all his ſufferings were voluntary. IV. Chriſt celebrated the paſſover with his diſciples, according to the cuſtom of the Jews, to ſhew, that he ſtrictly obſerved every thing that was preſcribed by the law of God; but he chiefly did it becauſe his deſign was to inſtitute the Lord's ſupper, and to ſubſtitute it in the place of the Jewiſh paſſover. This ought to inſpire us with a very great reſpect for this divine ceremony, which our Lord has eſtabliſhed as a memorial of his death, and to engage us to celebrate it with faith and thankſgiving, according to his intentions. Finally, The prediction that St *Peter* ſhould deny him, ſuppoſes our Lord to have an entire knowledge of the heart of man; and what he ſaid to that apoſtle, who vowed he would never forſake him, ought to fill us with a diſtruſt of ourſelves, which is of great uſe; and induce us to improve the warning which God gives us, and to ſeek in humility, in watching, and in prayer, for that conſtancy and courage, ſo neceſſary to ſecure us from being ſurpriſed by temptation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV. 32——72.

I. ST *Mark* relates here what Christ suffered in the garden. II. How he was apprehended by the Jews who were conducted by *Judas*. III. What passed while Jesus was before the council. IV. St *Peter's* fall, and his repentance.

REFLECTIONS.

THE extreme anguish which our Lord felt in the garden is one of the most remarkable circumstances of his passion. It discovers very plainly to us, that he suffered to atone for the sins of mankind; and we may judge from thence how great is the horror of sin, and with what despair the wicked will be seized, when they are rejected of God, and undergo the punishment due to their sins. We ought next, in imitation of Jesus Christ, who in his agony prayed with so much fervour, and with so perfect a submission to the will of his father, to call upon God with perseverance when we are under affliction; and at the same time, with an entire resignation to his will, saying, *Lord, not what I will, but what thou wilt*. Jesus Christ gives us all a very important piece of advice, when he says, *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation; the spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak*. Christ assures us thereby, that the infallible way not to fall into sin, is to distrust our own weakness, and to watch and pray; but that we are drawn away by temptations as soon as ever we neglect these means. By the manner in which our Lord was taken, and by what he then said to *Judas*, and to the Jews, it appears plainly, that of his own free choice, and by the divine permission, he was taken and condemned; this is another powerful inducement for us to love our Saviour most fervently,

who has been pleased to expose himself thus freely to death for our sakes, and to engage us to acquiesce and submit to the will of the Lord in all things. Observe, that Jesus appeared before the council; that he was examined, and that witnesses were heard against him; but could not be convicted of any crime, notwithstanding all the pains which his enemies took to find out accusations and false witnesses against him; and was condemned only because he confessed himself to be the Son of God: which was so ordered by providence, to evince the perfect innocence of our Lord. That great meekness, and that spirit of humility and patience, which our Lord manifested in his discourses, and in suffering all the indignities they put upon him, is a very sensible proof of his submission to the will of his father, and of his love towards us, and a pattern of patience, to which we ought to conform ourselves. We have likewise seen, how our Lord owned that he was the Son of God; and said, that the Jews should see him sitting at the right hand of God, and coming in his glory. This was fulfilled quickly after, when the Jews were destroyed, and when they saw the kingdom of our Lord established in the world. We ought also to improve, to our own advantage, the fall of St *Peter*, who denied his Master, after such a solemn protestation that he would never forsake him. Every body, even those who have great zeal and good intentions, may learn from hence, how great our weakness is, and that we ought to be upon our guard against temptation: and the repentance of this apostle, which was so speedy and so bitter, teaches us, that when we stumble, or have fallen, we ought to rise again immediately, be heartily grieved for our sin, and repair it by having recourse to the mercy of God, and by a sincere conversion and reformation.

CHAP. XV.

I. CHRIST is brought before *Pilate*, who, after having endeavoured to deliver him, consents at last to his death. II. He is crucified, dies, and is buried.

REFLECTIONS.

IN what passed before *Pilate*, there are four things chiefly to be observed. I. The injustice and rage of the Jews, which nothing could appease, and who so earnestly solicited the condemnation of Jesus, that they preferred even a murderer before him. II. The humility, silence, and patience of our Lord, who submitted himself to the judgment of *Pilate*, and underwent, without complaining, all the unjust treatment he received from them. These are strong proofs of his love for men, whom he desired to save; and of his submission to the will of his father; and it is likewise an example of resignation for such as are exposed to sufferings, or to the injustice of men. III. It is to be observed, that the innocence of Christ was fully acknowledged by *Pilate*, which aggravated the guilt of the Jews, as well as that of the governor. And, lastly, That that unjust judge, after having refused to do what the Jews required, and, after having endeavoured to save the life of Christ, did at length pronounce the sentence of death against him. *Pilate* knew what justice required of him; he had even good intentions, but wanted courage and resolution to follow them. Thus do they who sin against conviction; they know their duty, and have some good inclination towards it; but after they have resisted temptation for a while, do at last yield to it, for fear of men, and out of views of policy and interest, or for some other principle of the like nature; whereas good men do always adhere to their duty, and pursue with

ſteadineſs the dictates of their conſcience, without turning aſide for any conſideration whatever. In the hiſtory of our Lord's paſſion, we are chiefly to conſider the torments of that cruel puniſhment he underwent; the ſhame and ignominy to which he was expoſed, by being crucified between two thieves; the outrages and inſults which the Phariſees and prieſts offered to him whilſt he was faſtened to the croſs; and, laſtly, The death which put an end to his ſufferings. We diſcover in all this the profound humiliation of the Son of God; the great love that he has ſhewn for us, and an example of moſt perfect patience. Wherefore we ought to look upon his death as the price of our redemption, and the ſupport of our faith; to love this kind Saviour, who has ſo loved us; to renounce ſin, which he came to deſtroy by his death; and to learn from him to bear our croſs, and to ſuffer patiently when we are called thereto. The hiſtory of Chriſt's burial, and the enquiry *Pilate* made before he would grant his body to *Joſeph*, prove that he was really dead, and, conſequently, that he really roſe again. The conſideration of his burial is likewiſe very proper to diſperſe the fear that we may entertain of death, and of the grave, and to raiſe our minds to the expectation of a better life.

CHAP. XVI.

I. IN this laſt chapter of St *Mark*, we ſee the hiſtory of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt. II. The orders he gave his apoſtles before he left the world. And, III. His aſcenſion.

REFLECTIONS.

WHAT is contained in this chapter eſtabliſhes the truth and certainty of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, ſince it was confirmed by the apparition

and teftimony of the angels, and that our Lord was feen firft by the women that went to his fepulchre, and afterwards by the apoftles, at feveral times. We ought to confider next, how glorious this refurrection was, God having been pleafed to fend angels to open the tomb of our Lord, and to declare to men that he was rifen again. This wonderful event proves, therefore, that Jefus was the Son of God, and is an affurance to us, that he has perfectly reconciled us to God by the facrifice of himfelf, and that he has overcome death and the grave. This refurrection is likewife a certain earneft of our own, which ought to fill us with comfort and confidence, and powerfully excite us to holinefs. The command that Chrift gave his apoftles, to go and preach and baptize throughout the world, and the power with which he endued them to work all forts of miracles, fhew, that he fpake as king of the church, and Lord of all things; and the event agreeing with what he had faid, does undeniably prove, that he is exalted to a fupreme power, and that the gofpel is a divine and heavenly doctrine. We may obferve particularly, that Chrift fpeaks of baptifm after fuch a manner, as proves that this ceremony is of divine inftitution; but that he declares, at the fame time, that baptifm will not fave us, unlefs it be attended with a true faith. Laftly, The afcenfion of Chrift obliges us to confider him as one who has a fovereign authority over all things, and who muft be our judge. And fince he is likewife gone to heaven, to prepare a place for us there, we may afpire and endeavour, by holinefs and by good works, to attain to that glorious manfion into which our Redeemer is entered, and where he is feated at the right hand of God.

The End of the Gofpel according to St MARK.

THE GOSPEL According to ST LUKE.

ARGUMENT.

This Gospel was written about twenty years after the ascension of Jesus Christ, by St Luke, *who was the disciple and companion of St* Paul, *and followed him in his travels.*

CHAP. I. 1—38.

I. AN angel appearing to *Zachariah* foretels the birth of *John* the baptist. II. And six months after, the same angel was sent to the blessed virgin, to foretel the birth of our Lord.

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

WHAT we have been reading relates to the birth of *John* the baptiſt, and his miniſtry. As to his birth, it may be obſerved, that there was ſomething extraordinary and ſupernatural in it, ſince he proceeded from a father advanced in years, and from a mother that was old and barren; that God gave notice of his birth by an angel; and that *Zachariah* the father, who could not believe it, was aſſured of it by a miracle, which God wrought in ſtriking him dumb. All which tended to ſhew, that *John* the baptiſt was to be an extraordinary perſon, and ſent from God; this birth was likewiſe a prelude to that of Jeſus Chriſt, which would be yet more miraculous, ſince he was to be born of a virgin. As to the miniſtry of *John* the baptiſt, we ought ſeriouſly to conſider what the angel ſaid to *Zachariah*, revealing to him what his ſon was one day to be; namely, that he would be filled with the holy Ghoſt, that he ſhould go before the face of the Lord, and that, like another *Elias*, he would perſuade men to turn unto God, and to live a life of righteouſneſs by the ſeverity of his own life, by his authority, by his great zeal, and by the power of his exhortations; and that by this means he would prepare them to receive the Meſſiah, of whom he was to be the forerunner. Let us learn from hence this important leſſon, that the deſign of God in ſending *John* the baptiſt, and afterwards Jeſus Chriſt, was to bring about the converſion of mankind, to withdraw them from their ſins, and make them a holy people, and given to good works. In what the angel ſaid to the virgin *Mary*, when he acquainted her that ſhe was to be the mother of Jeſus Chriſt, we may chiefly remark theſe two things: One, that the body of our Lord was formed of the ſubſtance of the virgin, by the

operation of the holy Ghost; and the other, that this Jesus, who was to be born of *Mary*, would be the Son of God, that he would be exalted to very great glory, and that he would reign for ever. From whence we may collect, that the birth of Christ was miraculous, and intirely free from pollution; that he did really assume our nature, and become man like unto us; but that he was also perfectly holy and separated from sinners. Lastly, It is to be observed, that though the blessed virgin could at first scarce believe what the angel told her, yet when she had heard the message more fully explained, she then no longer doubted but what had been declared to her from God, would certainly come to pass. This was a proof of the faith and piety of the blessed virgin, and a pattern to us how we should believe the promises of God, made to us in his word; being fully persuaded that he will never want power nor means to bring about his promises, how difficult soever the execution of them may appear to us.

CHAP. I. 39—80.

I. ST *Luke* gives us an account of the blessed virgin's visit to *Elizabeth*, and her song on this occasion. II. Of the birth of *John* the baptist, and the song of his father *Zachariah*.

REFLECTIONS.

LET it here be considered, I. That the blessed virgin, having been informed by the angel *Gabriel*, that her cousin *Elizabeth* had also miraculously conceived, went immediately to visit her, and was by this means more fully confirmed in a belief that the Messiah should be born of her, according to the message she had received from God. But what deserves chiefly to be taken notice of, is the song of *Mary* on this occasion.

occasion. In this song we see how she was transported with joy and gratitude, at the sense of the favour God had done her, in making choice of her to be the mother of the Messiah. In it we discover her profound humility, and at the same time her faith and firm persuasion that God was going to deliver his people, and to fulfil the promises he had made them of sending the Redeemer. This engages us to honour the memory of the blessed virgin, and to celebrate her happiness as she herself has described it; to imitate her piety, her faith, and her other virtues; to abase ourselves before God as she did, under the sense of his mercies, and of our own unworthiness, and praise him above all things for having sent into the world Christ our Saviour, according to the promises made by the prophets. The birth of *John* the baptist was attended with several very remarkable circumstances; *Zachariah* his father did then recover his speech by a miracle; the rumour of his son's birth was spread abroad, and all people were in great expectation what that child would one day be. All these events were the dispensations of providence, that the Jews might be prepared to look upon *John* the baptist as one sent from God, to receive his preaching, and to believe his testimony concerning Jesus Christ. In the song which *Zachariah* did then pronounce by the inspiration of the holy Ghost, we may observe these three things: First, His joy, his gratitude, and thanks to God, that the time was come to redeem his people. Secondly, His extraordinary faith, since, though the Messiah was yet unborn, he was firmly convinced that he would shortly appear, and that his Son would be his forerunner. Thirdly, *Zachariah* shews in this song the design of Christ's coming, when he says, *That we being delivered from the hands of our enemies, might serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness,*

ness, all the days of our life. This should stir us up to bless God with *Zachariah*, and even more than he, for saving us by Jesus Christ; and to extol his mercy, as well as his faithfulness, and the truth of his promises. And since our Lord is come to consecrate us to the service of God, it is our duty to answer the design of his coming, by serving God faithfully, and by living in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.

CHAP. II. 1——20.

WE have here the history of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Reflections.

THE first reflection we are to make upon the history of our Saviour's birth is, that the Messiah being to be born at *Bethlehem*, according to the prophecies, providence conducted the blessed virgin from *Galilee*, where she dwelt, to that city, by means of the decree of the emperor *Augustus*, who had ordered an account to be taken of the number of all his subjects, and that therefore every one should resort to the place of his birth. II. That our Lord was born in very poor and mean circumstances, being born in an inn and laid in a manger; by which God was pleased as it were to declare beforehand, that Christ was not to live in pomp and glory, and that his kingdom would not be of this world, and that humility and poverty would be his character. III. For the same reason it was that the first persons who were honoured with the news of Christ's birth were shepherds, plain men, of an obscure condition, and not the rich and great. All these things are great lessons of humility to Christians. However, it must be observed, that this birth was rendered illustrious by the apparition of

of the angels, and by the song of those blessed spirits. It pleased God, moreover, that the shepherds should go to *Bethlehem* to see the child Jesus, and to inform the holy virgin of all the wonders they had seen and heard; and then that they should publish them all abroad, that the expectation of the Jews might be excited, and they prepared for the reception of Jesus Christ. All these circumstances of our Lord's birth ought to strengthen our faith, and fill us with joy and comfort; we ought especially to join our praises to those of the shepherds and holy angels, and bless God with them, that a Saviour is born unto us; and by his birth, peace given to the earth, and the good will of God so clearly manifested towards men.

CHAP. II. 21——52.

ST *Luke* relates, I. The circumcision of Christ, the presenting him in the temple, and the thanksgivings of *Simeon* and *Anna* the prophetess. II. He informs us in the next place, how Christ, being twelve years old, was found in the temple in the midst of the doctors.

REFLECTIONS.

WE may consider, I. In relation to what is here said about the circumcision of Christ, his presentation in the temple, the purification of the virgin, and the offering which she made according to the custom, that God thought fit that all these things should be observed, after the birth of our Lord, because they were prescribed by the law, and that the Jews might not have any appearance of reason for rejecting him. II. The joy which *Simeon* and *Anna* the prophetess shewed at that time, and the praises which they publicly gave to God, are an argument of their faith and zeal, and that the birth of Christ is the

the most happy and the most salutary event that ever came to pass, and that therefore we ought to have a very joyful sense of it, and incessantly to bless the Lord for it; and the rather, because what *Simeon* said in his song, has been accomplished in us, and we are some of those Gentiles, to whom the Messiah came to give light and salvation. III. What *Simeon* said to the blessed virgin, of the glory of her Son, as well as of the contradictions and sufferings to which he should be exposed; tended to convince her, that the kingdom of Christ would not be a temporal kingdom, and to prepare her to see him rejected by the Jews, and put to death. As for us, we ought to learn from thence, that our Saviour was to be received by some, and rejected by others; and that if his coming be a blessing to such as receive him with faith, it is an occasion of scandal and destruction to unbelievers. IV. That which happened to Christ at the age of twelve years, when he was found in the temple in the midst of the doctors, is the only circumstance of his life, from his birth and return from *Egygt* to the beginning of his ministry, which has been made known to us. This particular instance was recorded to shew, that there appeared in him, even from his earliest youth, extraordinary understanding, wisdom and zeal, and that he was to be one day endowed with the spirit of God in an abundant manner. God was pleased thereby to begin to make him known to the Jews, and to dispose them to profit by his ministry, when he should exercise it among them.

CHAP. III.

THIS chapter contains three things: I. The preaching of *John* the baptist. II. The baptism of Jesus Christ. And, III. His genealogy.

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS.

ST *Luke* informs us here, that before the appearance of our Lord, *John* the baptiſt was ſent, as had been foretold by the prophets, to prepare the Jews for his reception: this he did by preaching repentance, and by exhorting the people to believe on him who was to come ſoon after; by baptizing thoſe that received his doctrine, and by threatning the unbelieving and impenitent Jews, that although they were the children of *Abraham*, they ſhould not eſcape the wrath to come, and that God could raiſe up other children to *Abraham*, even from the ſtones; which denoted that the Gentiles ſhould be called in their ſtead. All this tended to make the Jews underſtand that the kingdom of the Meſſiah was ſhortly to be manifeſted; but that it was to be a ſpiritual and heavenly kingdom, and not an earthly kingdom as they expected; and that no body would have any ſhare in the advantages of that kingdom, but ſuch as ſhould give themſelves up to holineſs and to virtue. Theſe inſtructions concern us as well as the Jews; they ſhew, that without amendment of life we cannot be the diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt; that he receives into his church and kingdom, only thoſe who bring forth fruits meet for repentance. *John* the baptiſt declares further, that to be in covenant with God, and to have a great appearance of zeal, ſignifies nothing; but that we muſt ſhew by the effects and by our works, the ſincerity of our faith and repentance; and that hardened and impenitent ſinners ſhall no more eſcape divine vengeance than hypocrites. The example of thoſe who went to hear *John* the baptiſt and to aſk his advice, teaches us our duty. It is the character of true penitents freely to confeſs their ſins, and to apply for inſtruction as their needs require, and follow it with docility. Beſides this, the different advice *John* the

baptiſt

baptist gave the people, the publicans and the soldiers, shews us, that every one ought faithfully to discharge the duties of his calling, and to avoid those sins and temptations to which it may expose him; particularly, that we ought to exercise charity, and to renounce covetousness, injustice, violence and fraud. What we are to consider about the baptism of Jesus Christ, is, that God thought fit he should be baptized by *John*, and that upon this occasion the holy Ghost came down upon him, and a voice was heard from heaven, that *John* the baptist himself, the Jews, and all men, might consider our Lord as the Son of God, and as him whom they ought to obey. As to the genealogy of Jesus Christ, here set down by St *Luke*, we must observe that it differs from that of St *Matthew*, because St *Matthew* gives us the genealogy of *Joseph*, the husband of the holy virgin, by *Solomon*, the son of king *David*; whereas St *Luke* deduces the virgin's pedigree by *Nathan*, who was likewise a son of *David*. Jesus passed for the son of *Joseph*, and was so in the eye of the law; but he descended from *Heli*, and was his son, that is, his grandson by *Mary* his mother, who was the daughter of *Heli*. Both these genealogies agree in making our Lord to descend from king *David* and the patriarch *Abraham*, which was one of the characters of the Messiah.

CHAP. IV. 1—15.

THE evangelist gives us here the history of our Saviour's fasting and temptation. And how he began the exercise of his ministry in *Galilee*.

REFLECTIONS.

I. OUR Saviour's fast was by way of preparation to the exercise of his ministry, in which he resembled *Moses*, who had also fasted forty days when God

God gave him the law on mount *Sinai*. If Jesus Christ was pleased to fast, who had no need of mortification, we ought by no means to neglect so useful an exercise, who stand in so great need of abstinence and self-denial. II. We must know, that when the devil is said to tempt Jesus, the meaning is, that he had a mind to try whether Jesus was the Son of God; and that God permitted him to be thus tempted, before he began to preach the gospel, and to work miracles; that the devil, being convinced that Jesus was really the Son of God, he might revere his power and obey his commands, when afterwards he should drive out devils from such as were possessed by them. The end therefore of this temptation was, to shew that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he came into the world to destroy the kingdom of the devil. To this general consideration, we may add two particular ones: The first is, that we should resist all temptations, and especially such as lead us to distrust the divine assistance, or to presumption, or to the love of glory, and the good things of this world: The second consideration relates to the means of resisting temptation. The retreat of Jesus Christ into the wilderness, his fasting, and the manner in which he repelled the assaults of the devil, teach us, that retirement, fasting, prayer, and the word of God, are the most efficacious methods to overcome temptation, and to defeat the attempts of the enemies of our salvation.

CHAP. IV. 16—44.

I. OUR Lord being at *Nazareth* on a sabbath-day, in the synagogue, read that prophesy of *Isaiah*, which described God's sending the Messiah, and filling him with his spirit, to declare to men the glad tidings

tidings of salvation; and he shewed that that prophecy was fulfilled in his own person. Then he reproached the inhabitants of that city with their unbelief, which did so exasperate them, that they would have thrown him down headlong from a precipice; but he escaped their fury. II. He went from thence to *Capernaum*, where he cured a man possessed with a devil, as also the mother in law of St *Peter*, and several other diseased persons; and went through *Galilee*, working miracles, and preaching the gospel.

Reflections.

I. THE meaning and design of our Lord's discourse in the synagogue of *Nazareth*, was, first, to shew that since he was endued with the gifts of the holy Ghost, and published to men the glad tidings of salvation; the prophesy of *Isaiah*, quoted in this chapter, was fulfilled in him. II. Jesus was desirous to make the inhabitants of that city, among whom he had been brought up, sensible that their infidelity was the cause that he did not work the same miracles among them as he had elsewhere; in the same manner as formerly *Elijah* and *Elisha* had wrought miracles in favour of strangers, preferably to those of their own nation; whence we learn, that those who have the best means and the greatest opportunities of knowing the truth, often make the least use of them; and again, that God deprives those of his grace and salutary presence, who render themselves unworthy of it. In the resolution which the inhabitants of *Nazareth* took, to throw down Christ from a precipice, we have a fresh proof of that infidelity which he reproached them with, and of their ingratitude. Thus sinners are angry with those who tell them the truth, and reproach them for their faults. However, Christ gave another mark of his infinite power in escaping the fury of these wretches,

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who would have taken away his life. The ſeveral miracles that are related about the end of this chapter, and by which our Lord began to make himſelf known in *Galilee*, and the care he took to paſs thro' all its towns preaching the goſpel, are ſo many proofs of his great zeal, of his unlimited power, of his love towards mankind, and of the divinity of his doctrine.

CHAP. V.

I. ST *Luke* ſpeaks of the miraculous draught of fiſhes which St *Peter* caught at our Lord's command. II. Of the healing of the leper. III. And of the paralytic. IV. Of the calling of *Levi*, or the apoſtle St *Matthew*. And laſtly, of Jeſus's reply to thoſe who found fault at his eating with publicans and ſinners, and at his diſciples not faſting as thoſe of *John* did.

REFLECTIONS.

WE ought to admire the power of Chriſt as well as his wiſdom, in the wonderful draught of fiſhes, which we have read the hiſtory of. He wrought this miracle to confirm St *Peter* and ſome of his companions in their vocation to the office of apoſtles; and to aſſure them that they ſhould be very ſucceſsful in their miniſtry. This miracle muſt have made the greater impreſſion on them, as our Lord did it in a matter that related to their own buſineſs; as they were fiſhers they were the more ſenſible of the greatneſs of it; and it did accordingly produce ſuch an effect in the mind of St *Peter*, who being ſeized with admiration, reſpect and fear, at the ſight of what had happened, immediately, with his companions St *James* and St *John*, forſook all to follow our Lord. In the cure of the leper, there are theſe two things to be obſerved, *viz.* That it was for his

faith and prayers that he was made whole, and that our Lord ſent him to the prieſt, and commanded him to offer what was ordered by the law of *Moſes* in the like caſe. He did this the better to convince the prieſts of the certainty of the miracle he had wrought, and to ſhew that he obſerved all that God had commanded in the law. There is in the caſe of the paralytical perſon this peculiarity, that to him our Lord granted not only the cure of his bodily diſeaſe, but pardon of ſins, which he declared he had power to do: a proof to us that he had a ſupreme authority over all men: and as it was the faith of thoſe that preſented him to the Lord which moved him to work a cure upon him; this teaches us, that faith is of very great efficacy, and that he that would feel the effects of God's grace and favour muſt pray with confidence. Of all favours, the moſt neceſſary, and that which we are moſt ſure to obtain, is pardon of ſins. It is to be obſerved in the calling of St *Matthew*, who was a publican, or a collector of taxes, that our Lord choſe his diſciples and apoſtles among perſons that were even looked upon with contempt by the Jews, as were the publicans. In imitation of St *Matthew*, who left his employment as ſoon as Jeſus called him, we muſt learn to obey the heavenly call as ſoon as we receive it, and renounce without delay every thing that may hinder us. Our Saviour's reply to the Phariſees, who were offended at his keeping company with ſinners, teaches us, that the end of his coming was to ſave ſinners; but however, that ſinners cannot be ſaved without repentance; this likewiſe ſhews us, that thoſe who have the ſpirit of Chriſt, are glad when God turns ſinners from the error of their ways, and earneſtly endeavour to bring them into the right way. Laſtly, It muſt be remembered, that if our Lord did not oblige his diſciples to faſt, as the diſciples of *John* the baptiſt did, we muſt not imagine that our Lord's

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ſenſe of the duty of faſting differed from that of *John*, or that the faſts which *John*'s diſciples obſerved were too difficult for Chriſt's diſciples to perform. The only difference between them in this reſpect, was, that Chriſt converſed freely with all ſorts of people, and upon all occaſions, whereas *John* the baptiſt lived a retired life. He declares, however, that his diſciples would be called, after his departure from them, not only to faſting but to great ſufferings; and, that if he did not call them at that time to ſufferings, it was to ſpare their weakneſs. From hence we may gather, that Chriſt was ſo far from condemning faſting and a mortified life, or from ſuffering his diſciples to hunt after pleaſures and gratify their ſenſes, that, on the contrary, he calls them to live in ſobriety and mortification, and to bear their croſs.

CHAP. VI. 1——19.

I. OUR Lord vindicates his diſciples plucking and eating the ears of corn on the ſabbath-day. II. He cures a man that had a withered hand. And, III. He appoints the twelve apoſtles.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THE reflection we are to make upon our Lord's anſwer to the Phariſees, who were offended becauſe his diſciples had plucked the ears of corn, and becauſe he himſelf had healed a man with a withered hand on the ſabbath-day, is, that the hypocritical and envious are very apt to condemn others, and are offended at that which is innocent and lawful, and ſometimes even with actions that are neceſſary and commendable; and ſcruple things of ſmall moment, while they themſelves are wanting in the moſt eſſential duties of piety and charity. We

ought, therefore, to learn from hence to avoid hypocrisy, superstition, and rash judgment; and always to cleave to the most weighty matters in religion, and to a solid piety enlightened and attended with charity. We further learn, that no one should omit actions truly good and necessary under a pretence that some people may judge ill of them; and that the fear of offending persons of bad dispositions should never keep us from our duty. What is to be observed on the calling of the apostles, is, that those holy men whom the Lord made choice of to be the dispensers of his grace and to convert the world, were mean and inconsiderable in the eye of the world; so that we see in this choice a proof of the divinity of the gospel, and of the almighty power of Christ, who endued them with gifts sufficient for such an employment. The memory of these first ministers of the gospel should be precious among Christians, who ought to praise God for the great things he has done by their means; to receive the doctrine they taught, and which is contained in their writings; and lastly, to practise the holy commands which they have left us, as the apostles of our Lord and Saviour, to whom be ascribed all glory, praise, and obedience, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAP. VI. 20—49.

WE have here a discourse of our Lord concerning the true happiness and misery of man; of charity; of preserving peace; of the love of our enemies; of rash judgment; and of some other duties. He concludes by a parable, shewing, that it is of no use to hear his word, if we do not do the things which he commandeth.

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REFLECTIONS.

THIS discourse contains several useful instructions. The first is, that the poor, afflicted, despised, and persecuted, who are at the same time, meek, patient, and godly, are the true disciples of Jesus Christ, and will be happy in this world and the next; and that on the contrary, those who are thought the most happy, because they live in plenty and in pleasures, and because they are loved and esteemed by the world, are the most miserable. The second instruction is, that we ought to love every body, even those that do not love us; to return them good for evil; to suffer some loss or injury rather than revenge ourselves, or engage in quarrels and law-suits; that if we only love those who love us, we are no better than heathens; but that we ought to be merciful and to do good to all; imitating therein our heavenly father, who is kind both to the wicked and ungrateful. Our Lord has forbidden us to pass rash judgments; and declared that it is a very great piece of hypocrisy, to examine and censure other mens faults without amending our own, which are oftentimes greater than those of our neighbours. The fourth instruction is comprised in these expressions; namely, that *the tree is known by its fruit*; and that *from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*. That is to say, that men shew by their behaviour and discourse what they are; and that the way to order our actions and words aright, is to purify our hearts. Lastly, Christ tells us in the most positive manner, that he does not acknowledge for his disciples those that call him Lord, but do not obey his commands; and shews, by the comparison of one house built on a rock, and another upon the sand, that nothing can shake those, who, to the knowledge of the gospel join the practice of its

 duties;

duties; whereas thoſe that content themſelves with hearing his word, without doing that which it commands, cannot reſiſt temptations, nor attain ſalvation. Let us inceſſantly ſet before our eyes theſe divine rules of morality preſcribed by Jeſus Chriſt; let us make them ſubſervient to our advancing in piety; and let us beſeech him that he himſelf will enable us to do it by his grace.

CHAP. VII. 1—23.

JESUS cures the ſervant of a Gentile captain; raiſes from the dead the ſon of a widow woman of the city of *Nain*; and anſwers the diſciples of *John* the baptiſt, who came to aſk him whether he was the Meſſiah.

REFLECTIONS.

IN the cure of the centurion's ſervant, we may remark the humility of that officer, who, being a Gentile by birth, thought himſelf not worthy that Chriſt ſhould come into his houſe; as alſo the greatneſs of his faith, which appears in his belief that our Lord, without coming to ſee his ſervant, could heal him by one word only. Our Lord's extraordinary commendations of the faith of this centurion, ſaying, "that he had not found ſuch faith among the Jews," and the miracle he wrought in his favour, ſhew very plainly, that nothing is more acceptable to him than faith and humility; and that a lively faith, and a profound ſenſe of our own unworthineſs, are the ſure means to obtain from him the effects of his mercy. The other miracle that our Lord wrought in raiſing the ſon of the widow of *Nain*, is an event in which the power of Jeſus Chriſt appears in a manner yet more illuſtrious, as well as his goodneſs and compaſſion for the afflicted. This hiſtory,

history, therefore, affords very powerful motives for trust and reliance on him; which ought to fill us with comfort, and fully convince us, that as our Lord has raised the dead upon several occasions, he is able to restore us to life after death, and that he will certainly do it at the last day, according to his promises. Our Saviour's answer to *John*'s disciples is remarkable; for, being asked whether he was the Messiah, he did not give a direct answer, but contented himself with working miracles in their presence, which proved more plainly that he was the Messiah, than if he had said it himself. We see in this part of our Saviour's conduct, a remarkable instance of his wisdom; since, by not directly calling himself the Messiah, which he always avoided doing publickly, he did, however, every thing that was most proper to convince men that he was that great Redeemer which God had promised to send, and the Jews expected.

CHAP. VII. 24—50.

I. OUR Lord speaks of *John* the baptist, representing the nature and excellence of his ministry. II. He complains, that most of the Jews, and particularly the scribes and Pharisees, had rejected his ministry, as well as that of *John*. III. Being at dinner with a Pharisee, he pronounces forgiveness of sins to the woman that was a sinner.

REFLECTIONS.

THE meaning of what Christ said to the Jews concerning the ministry of *John* the baptist, was, that as *John* the baptist had not appeared in the pomp and splendor which usually attend the ambassadors of earthly kings, but only in quality of a great prophet; they should not be surprised, if he

himſelf appeared in a low condition, nor reject him on that account. By which he would give them to underſtand, that the kingdom of the Meſſiah ſhould have nothing in it carnal and worldly; and engage them to attend wholly to his ſpiritual and divine doctrines. II. Chriſt ſays on this occaſion, that as great as *John* the baptiſt was, the leaſt in the kingdom of God, that is, of his true diſciples, would be greater than he; becauſe Chriſtians know more of the Meſſiah, and the reaſons of his coming, than *John* the baptiſt himſelf did. Theſe words, which inform us of the advantages of our condition, ſhould ſtir us up to act in a manner ſuitable to them, and to render ourſelves worthy of them. III. We ſee that thoſe perſons who were the moſt contemptible, and the moſt hated among the Jews, were affected at the preaching of *John* the baptiſt and our Saviour; but that the Phariſees, and thoſe who paſſed for the wiſeſt among them, had rejected thoſe exhortations, ſaying, that the life of *John* the baptiſt was too ſtrict, and that of Chriſt too looſe, becauſe he often kept company with ſinners. This inſtance proves, that nothing can ſatisfy a corrupt heart. Behave with ever ſo great caution, there is no avoiding the cenſure of ſuch perſons; whilſt thoſe whoſe heart is right, do zealouſly lay hold of the means which God affords for their edification and ſalvation. IV. The hiſtory of the woman that was a ſinner, has ſomething in it very remarkable, and inſtructs us in the nature and efficacy of true repentance. We find in the penitent ſinner here mentioned, a pattern of that profound humility with which great ſinners ought to bewail their ſins; and of that lively ſorrow which pierces the ſoul, and which expreſſes itſelf by confeſſion, by tears, and by all the tokens of a ſincere compunction, and of a holy confuſion; and which produces an entire renunciation of ſin. We ſee here with how much good-

goodneſs the Saviour of the world receives true penitents, and pardons their faults. What he ſays to the Phariſee, who believed that Jeſus was not a prophet, becauſe he permitted that ſame ſinner to approach him, and to kiſs his feet; tended to convince him, that he knew very well what this woman was, but that he did not reject great ſinners when they were truly penetent, and that we alſo ſhould not reject nor deſpiſe them: we muſt likewiſe take a particular notice of theſe words of our Lord; *He to whom much is forgiven will love him the more.* By which he ſhews plainly, that thoſe to whom God pardons great ſins, ought to love him with greater fervency, and that they may even attain to a conſiderable degree of holineſs. This is a doctrine very proper for the conſolation of ſinners, and which ought to animate them to the love of God, and to the practice of piety and good works.

CHAP. VIII. 1—25.

THIS part of the eighth chapter of St *Luke*, includes three things. I. The parable of the ſeed. II. The declaration our Lord makes, that his true diſciples were as dear to him as his own kindred. And, III. The ſtilling the tempeſt,

REFLECTIONS.

THE deſign of Jeſus Chriſt in the parable of the ſeed, was to teach thoſe that heard him, that all men do not receive the word of God after the ſame manner. The ſeed that falls on the way-ſide, repreſents people that are entirely hardened, and ſuch as this word does not at all affect. By the ſeed that fell among ſtones, our Lord deſcribes the condition of thoſe on whom the word makes ſome impreſſion; who approve of it at firſt, and receive it

gladly;

gladly; but being not well grounded, they do not persevere, but yield to temptation. The seed that falls among thorns, sets before our eyes the condition of those hearers on whom the gospel does not produce its effect, because their heart is taken up with the love of riches and pleasures, and loaded with the cares of this life. But by the seed that is sown in good ground, and that brings forth much fruit, Christ denotes the effect which the word produces in those who receive it in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with perseverance. Let us listen seriously and continually to this parable; let us take care, as our Lord exhorts us here, after what manner we receive the word of God, and carefully examine ourselves, to see whether we make a good use of it. This is what we are further obliged to by the declaration which our Lord made, when he was told, that his mother and his near relations desired to speak with him. We may learn from what he then said, that what chiefly procures us a share in his love, is a great attention and a great zeal to hear his word and to do his will. What thus unites us to Christ, should also strictly unite us to each other. The bands of holiness are yet stronger than those of nature; and of all men, those ought to have the greatest share of our affection and esteem, who truly love our Lord Jesus Christ and keep his commandments. Lastly, We find here, that our Lord, who had done so many miracles for the relief of the afflicted, was pleased to work a miracle in favour of his apostles, delivering them from great danger, when they were ready to perish in the water. The apostles were in great fear upon this occasion, and our Lord taking notice of the weakness of their faith, rebukes them for it, but, however, delivers them from their danger. Our weaknesses do not hinder God from granting us the assistance we stand in need

need of, if we apply to him with ſincerity and humility. Thoſe whom God loves, may meet with great dangers, and, in ſuch a condition, they may be overcome with fears, but God will never forſake them; and whatever condition they are in, he favours them with his love and protection.

CHAP. VIII. 26—56.

CHRIST works three miracles: I. He cures the demoniac. And, II. The woman that had the iſſue of blood. III. Raiſes to life the daughter of *Jairus.*

REFLECTIONS.

WHAT is here related of the deplorable condition which the man poſſeſſed with a devil had for a long time been in, and the ſeveral circumſtances of his hiſtory, prove the certainty of the miracle which our Lord wrought on this occaſion, as well as his great mercy and goodneſs towards him. Chriſt's giving the devils leave to enter into the herd of ſwine, is another proof of the greatneſs and reality of the miracle, and of the abſolute power he had over the devils; and a proof, likewiſe, that thoſe wicked ſpirits feared and dreaded him as their judge. Jeſus having delivered this man, ordered him to declare abroad how great things God had done for him. Thus ought we to acknowledge and publiſh the goodneſs of the Lord towards us, when he has granted us any ſignal favour or deliverance. We ſhould conſider farther, that though men are not now expoſed to the power of the devils, as the poſſeſſed of devils were in our Saviour's time, they may fall, however, after another manner into the power of this enemy of our ſalvation. This is the dreadful condition of thoſe, of whom the ſcripture ſays, that the devil

devils works powerfully on them, and that they are taken captive by him at his will. In the cure of the woman who had an issue of blood, we are principally to attend to her sentiments and behaviour; not daring to present herself to our Lord, to beg him to heal her, she was contented to touch his garment; this shews her profound humility, and at the same time the greatness of her faith, and the high opinion she had of the power of Christ. Her speedy and miraculous cure does not only display the divine virtue that was in our Saviour, but does likewise convince us, that with humility and faith we shall obtain of him every thing necessary to salvation. The more we think ourselves unworthy of God's grace, the more ready is he to bestow it on us. Another thing worthy to be taken notice of, is, that our Lord knew this woman had touched him, though she had not made her address to him; which shews that nothing is hid from him, and that this and all his miracles were done because it was his will they should be done. The resurrection of the daughter of *Jairus*, is a still more considerable effect of our Lord's infinite power; this miracle, with some other of the like nature, does not suffer us to doubt whether Christ could raise the dead, nor that he shall one day do the same for our sakes also, as he has promised us.

CHAP. IX. 1—27.

ST *Luke* relates, I. The sending of the twelve apostles throughout *Judea*, and the instructions which our Lord gave them. II. The opinion that king *Herod* had of Christ. III. The miraculous multiplying of the five loaves and two fishes. IV. Our Lord's discourse with the apostles when he asked them their opinion concerning him, and forewarned them

them of his death, and exhorted them to prepare themselves for sufferings.

REFLECTIONS.

I. WHAT we are to consider in the sending the apostles is, that Christ ordered them to go before him into *Judea*, in order to spread abroad the glad tidings of the Messiah's coming, and to prepare the Jews, by their preaching and by their miracles, for his reception. He was likewise willing, by this method, to prepare them for their future preaching of the gospel throughout the whole earth. But that which we are chiefly to observe in Christ's speech to them is, that the ministry of the servants of God is only profitable to those that receive them; and that those who reject them, draw upon themselves a severe but just condemnation. II. It appears from hence, secondly, that they had a high opinion of our Lord among the Jews, since they took him for *Elias*, or some other of the prophets; but it is a thing worth notice, that *Herod*, who was a wicked prince, and of the sect of the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, should imagine that *John* the baptist, whom he had put to death, was risen again. We must consider this as an effect of his remorse of conscience, for having put to death that holy man. Though the ungodly reject the truths of religion, they are never firmly persuaded of the truth of their own sentiments, and when their conscience is roused, acknowledge those very truths which they doubted of and even denied before. III. The miracle of the five loaves and two fishes, which fed several thousand men, is one of the most remarkable miracles our Saviour wrought; since they were all so many witnesses of the surprising fact, and instruments in making it known to the world, which tended very much to confirm the truth of Christ's doctrine and his divine mission, and

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induce many to believe in him. What we are to gather from our Lord's discourse with his disciples, concerning the opinion men had of him, and what they themselves thought, is, that faith in Christ consists in looking upon him as the Messiah, and the Son of the living God. That he came into the world to suffer and to die. That no one can be his true disciple, without taking up his cross and being always ready to make a public and sincere profession of his faith. And lastly, That there is nothing of greater importance to us than the salvation of our souls; and that it would be of no advantage to us to gain the whole world, at the expence of our souls.

CHAP. IX. 28—62.

I. OUR Lord is transfigured in presence of three of his apostles; cures a lunatic whom his apostles could not cure; and tells them again, that he should be condemned to death. II. He teaches them humility, and blames them for hindering a man from casting out devils in his name, because he followed not them. III. He censures the inconsiderate zeal of two of his apostles; and returns an answer to three persons who desired to follow him.

REFLECTIONS.

THE transfiguration of our Lord, and the glory with which the apostles saw him then surrounded, is a convincing proof of the truth and divinity of the gospel; as St *Peter* himself, who was present at that transfiguration, takes notice in the first chapter of his second epistle. The presence of *Moses* and *Elias*, who were seen with Jesus at that time, and who discoursed with him about what he was to suffer at *Jerusalem*, shews, that this was he whose coming had been foretold by the prophets. God caused a voice

voice to be heard from heaven, after *Moses* and *Elias* were departed, to teach the apostles, and by them all mankind, that from thenceforth they were to hear Jesus only; and that he was infinitely greater than *Moses* and *Elias*, and all the prophets. Lastly, It is from hence evident, that those holy men, who had departed this life many ages before, were alive with God; and therefore we may conclude, that those who have served God faithfully in this life are not annihilated by death. We see in the cure of the lunatic, that the faith of the apostles was still very weak, as our Lord reproaches them; but that their faith grew stronger afterwards, in proportion as they were better instructed, and as their prejudices wore off. As the weakness of the apostles faith was the reason they could not cure the lunatic, so our slips and failings proceed only from the want of faith; for which reason, we ought to labour to be confirmed therein, and to beseech the Lord, that it may be more and more increased in us. From the lessons of humility which our Lord gave his disciples, let us learn, that haughty thoughts, and the love of worldly glory, are unworthy of Christians; that on the contrary, they ought to place their glory in humility, and esteem all those that believe in Christ, and that love him, even tho' they be mean and contemptible in the world. The answer that our Lord gave St *John*, who would have hindered a man from casting out devils in Christ's name, because that person did not keep company with the apostles, teaches us, that we must never oppose, upon any pretence, those who labour sincerely to advance the kingdom of our Lord. We ought to pay a due regard to piety wherever we find it; since every thing that is good must come from God. There are weighty reflections to be made upon the reproof which Christ gave *James* and *John*, who, being transported with an indiscreet zeal, and with that aversion

which

which the Jews bore to the *Samaritans*, were for bringing down fire from heaven upon those *Samaritans* that had refused to lodge their master. This is a warning to us, never to suffer ourselves to be overcome by a false and blind zeal, such is always that zeal which inclines us to do evil to men; but to be always endued, as Christ himself was, with the spirit of meekness and forbearance towards all, and particularly towards such as are in error, and that entertain sentiments of religion different from our own. By the answers which Christ gave the three persons that would have followed him, he would have them to understand, first, that he did not promise the conveniencies of this life to his disciples. Secondly, That they must be prepared to forsake all things for the love of him, even such as are innocent and lawful, when they are a hindrance to the discharge of our duty. And thirdly, When men are once engaged in his service, they are bound to follow that call, and not to look back to the world.

CHAP. X. 1—24.

I. CHRIST chooses seventy disciples, sends them before him, gives them power to work miracles, and necessary instructions for their office; and denounces the judgments of God against those cities which had not repented upon his preaching and doing miracles in them. II. The seventy disciples give an account to Christ of the success of their journey and ministry; upon which occasion he foretels the destruction of the kingdom of Satan. III. He praises God that the gospel was preached and received by persons of mean rank, and inconsiderable in the eye of the world; and he represents to his disciples how happy they were in being instructed by him in the great truths of the gospel.

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REFLECTIONS.

I. WE may obſerve, that Chriſt, who had already choſe twelve apoſtles, was pleaſed alſo to make choice of ſeventy diſciples, and ſend them into *Judea*, that the happy tidings of the coming of the kingdom of God might be ſpread with the greater diſpatch, and that they might be the better able to go and preach the ſame doctrine throughout all the earth afterwards. The inſtructions which he gave them ſhew, that the ſervants of God ought to exerciſe their office with fidelity, diſintereſtedneſs, and courage; that thoſe whoſe heart is right, and who are of a peaceable diſpoſition, will receive them; but that thoſe who refuſe to hear them, are inexcuſable. II. The threatnings which Chriſt denounces againſt the cities of *Galilee*, where he had preached and done miracles, are a warning to us, that thoſe who receive the greateſt favours from heaven, often abuſe them in a ſhameful manner; and that thoſe who have the goſpel preached to them, and do not grow better by it, muſt expect the ſevereſt puniſhment. III. Upon what Chriſt ſaid to the ſeventy diſciples, when they gave him an account of the ſucceſs of their journey, and of the miracles which they had wrought, we may obſerve, that he foretold the ſpeedy ruin of the kingdom of Satan, which actually happened ſoon after by the preaching of the goſpel. He likewiſe declared to them, that thought it was a very glorious privilege to be able to caſt out devils, they ought rather to rejoice that their names were written in heaven; that is to ſay, that they were the diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, and that the joys and glories of heaven were reſerved for them. The advantage of belonging to God, and of being in the number of true believers, is infinitely more conſiderable than the power of working miracles. IV. Let us alſo carefully attend to the

thanks which Christ returned to God, that the gospel was received by the mean and humble, whilst the great men of the world, and those who are looked upon as the wisest, did reject it. It is not to worldly persons, and those that have an high opinion of themselves, that God reveals himself; but it is to the meek and lowly, and to such as are of a sincere and honest heart. V. Let us also observe what our Lord assured his disciples of in such strong terms, that they were happy in being instructed by him, and in knowing those truths of the gospel, which were not known by the ancient prophets as they were by them. This advantage we enjoy in common with them; but let us remember at the same time, that if we do not make a good use of our happiness, such knowledge will only serve to render us more miserable, and that it would be much better for us to have never enjoyed it.

CHAP. X. 25—42.

I. CHRIST answers one of the scribes, who asked him, what he must do to obtain everlasting life. II. To teach that doctor of the law, that all men are our neighbours, he proposes to him the parable of a man that fell among thieves. III. Christ going to lodge in the house of *Martha* and *Mary*, takes occasion to commend the piety of *Mary*, who kept close to him, that she might hear him.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS portion of scripture furnishes us with three instructions. I. That the chief command of God, and the sum of all religion, is, to love God above all things, and our neighbours as ourselves. This is the way to fulfil the whole law, and to discharge every duty; and this is what we are bound to do, if

we

we desire to attain to true substantial holiness, and by that means to eternal life. II. That there is no man who is not our neighbour, and whom we ought not to love. This is what Christ teaches us by the parable of the Jew, who being wounded by thieves, was neither assisted by the priest, nor by the *Levite*, tho' they were his own countrymen; but was relieved by a *Samaritan*, who was a stranger, and of a people hated by the Jews. The design of Christ was thereby to shew, that all men, without exception, even strangers, and those that do not love us,* are our neighbours; that we are obliged to love them all, to do good to them, and to succour the unfortunate with all our might. This was a clear and evident truth, which, however, the most learned of the Jewish doctors did not rightly comprehend. III. The third instruction is taken from that which is said in this chapter of *Martha* and *Mary*. The judgment our Lord passed upon the behaviour of those two sisters, teaches us, that our chief care ought to be to adhere to him, and to hearken to his word; and that the employments of this life, even such as are lawful, ought never to make us neglect the thing that is most important of all, the one only thing necessary. And if we would be happy, we must, like *Mary*, choose that good part which shall never be taken from us.

CHAP. XI. 1—28.

I. CHRIST instructs his disciples about prayer. II. He cures a demoniack, and returns an answer to the Pharisees, who said that it was by the power of Satan he cast out devils. III. He proposes the parable of a man, into whom the evil spirit enters again, after it had gone out of him. IV. He speaks of the happiness of those who hear his word and keep it.

REFLECTIONS.

THE first instruction which the Saviour of the world here gives us, relates to prayer, and particularly to the Lord's prayer. This divine prayer having Jesus Christ for its author, and including all that is most important for us to ask, first, with respect to the glory of God, and in the next place to our own wants, as well for the body as the soul, we ought to present it to God with all possible reverence and attention; and at the same time, with an extraordinary degree of confidence; since, when we ask what our Lord has commanded us to ask, we cannot doubt but our prayers, as to the matter of them, are agreeable to the will of God: Our Lord teaches us moreover, that if when we desire any thing of men with great earnestness, we prevail upon them to grant our petitions, much more shall we, by our prayers, obtain from God, who is our father, true, that is, spiritual blessings: all this ought to stir us up to pray with earnestness and zeal, and not to faint in this holy exercise. II. The blasphemy of the Pharisees, who attributed to the devil the miracles which Christ wrought by virtue of the spirit of God, teaches us, that men who have a wicked heart, defeat the most powerful means made use of by God to overcome the hardness of their hearts, and that they are even more and more confirmed in their wickedness. III. The similitude of the evil spirit, that enters again into the man after he had been cast out, shews what would happen to the Jews, who had not laid hold of the advantage of Christ's presence, and of his miracles; namely, that they would fall into greater obdurateness, and would feel the divine vengeance: This is likewise what happens to all such, who, after having received the grace of God, do resist its motions, and engage again in sin. Let us learn, lastly, from

from the anſwer which our Saviour made to the woman that admired his diſcourſes, that the moſt glorious and the moſt advantageous thing to ourſelves, is to hear the word of God, and to obſerve what it commands, as is expreſſed in theſe words, *Bleſſed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.*

CHAP. XI. 29——54.

I. OUR Lord reproves the unbelief of the Jews, by ſetting before them the example of the *Ninevites*, and of the queen of *Sheba*. II. He tells them, that ſuch their unbelief could not hinder his doctrine, which was a light to lighten mankind, from being preached; and he ſhews, that in order to receive any benefit from it, our eye muſt be pure and ſingle; which is as much as to ſay, our minds muſt be free and diſengaged from prejudice and paſſion. III. Being invited to dine with a Phariſee, he declaims againſt the ſcribes and Phariſees, reproaching them for their hypocriſy, pride and infidelity, and threatning them with the judgments of God.

REFLECTIONS.

WE are taught, by the example of the queen of *Sheba*, and that of the *Ninevites*, that thoſe to whom God has granted a greater degree of light, and more conſiderable opportunities of ſalvation, have reaſon to expect a more ſevere condemnation if they neglect thoſe advantages, and perſiſt in their infidelity. II. What our Saviour ſaid of the candle ſet in a candleſtick, and of the eye, which is the light of the body, ſignifies theſe two things: one is, that he had made known his doctrine to his diſciples, to the end they might make it known to the world; and the other, that our minds muſt be rightly diſpoſed, and our hearts pure and ſincere, in order to receive

and to underſtand the excellency of this doctrine. III. We have ſeen our Lord reproaching the Phariſees for obſerving an external purity, for affecting great appearances of virtue, piety, zeal, and humility, and for ſhewing a great reſpect to the memory of the prophets, whilſt their hearts were filled with pride and covetouſneſs, whilſt they perſecuted thoſe whom God had ſent to them, and hindered men from believing in him; for which reaſon, he threatens them with total deſtruction. Hereby we may ſee in how great guilt men involve themſelves, when they ſuffer pride and covetouſneſs to poſſeſs their hearts, when they reject the word of God, and turn others away from faith and holineſs, which is the higheſt pitch of wickedneſs. Above all, this diſcourſe of our Lord teaches us, that God abhors hypocriſy; that thoſe who go no farther than to an outward purity, and neglect that of the heart and conſcience, are an abomination to him. Let us therefore ſtudy true holineſs. Let us remember that God chiefly has reſpect to the inward parts, and that the only way to pleaſe him, is to have an upright heart, and to be filled with charity; to be truly humble, to receive his word with ſubmiſſion, and to contribute all that in us lies to bring other men to faith and ſalvation.

CHAP. XII. 1—34.

THIS chapter contains an excellent diſcourſe of our Lord, in which, I. He exhorts his diſciples not to diſſemble the truths which they had learned of him, but to declare them publickly; and that the fear of men might not hinder them from ſo doing, he warns them to fear none but God, and to make an open profeſſion of the truth; and promiſes to defend and aſſiſt them when they ſhould appear before the great men of the world. II. Upon occaſion of

a man who had a dispute with another about an inheritance, he declaims against covetousness, shewing by the parable of a rich man, the folly of such as care for nothing but heaping up wealth; and telling them, that they should not be anxious for the necessaries of life, but depend upon providence, and be chiefly solicitous for what relates to the kingdom of God. III. He assures his disciples, that though they were weak, and but few in number, they should not fear the want of any thing that was necessary for them; and he exhorts them to make a right use of worldly goods.

Reflections.

CHRIST instructs us here about the profession of truth, and the love of worldly goods. I. Upon the first head, we see that Christians, and especially the ministers of Jesus Christ, ought to make a public profession of the truth, without standing in fear of men; since men can only kill the body, whereas God can cast both soul and body into hell. Whereby our Lord, in the clearest manner, settles the distinction between soul and body, the immortality of the soul, and the punishments of the wicked in the life to come. Our Lord declares moreover, that God watches over those who fear him, and who suffer for his sake; that he assists them by his spirit; that at the last day he will own them for his, that shall have had the courage to call themselves his disciples; but that he will not own those who, through fear of death, shall not have dared to make an open confession of their faith. These are very powerful considerations, to animate us to a free and sincere profession of Christianity. II. Let us seriously reflect upon what our Lord says concerning the love of worldly goods, and upon the parable of the man that had heaped up great wealth, but died at the

time he thought to enjoy it. Chriſt was willing to ſhew thereby, that it is a great folly to care only for gathering of riches, which we muſt leave when we come to die, and to neglect the acquiring heavenly goods, which are ſolid and eternal. He has likewiſe exhorted us not to diſquiet ourſelves for the wants of the body, but to truſt to providence, which provides for the neceſſities of all creatures; to ſeek, before all things, the kingdom of God; and inſtead of engaging all our care for the things of the world, and ſetting our hearts upon them, to employ our wealth in alms, in order to ſecure to ourſelves the poſſeſſion of an everlaſting treaſure.

CHAP. XII. 35—59.

I. CHRIST exhorts his diſciples to watch, and to be continually prepared for his coming. II. He repreſents to them, that the duties of which he had diſcourſed, related to them in a particular manner; they being as it were ſtewards, appointed in the houſe of their maſter, for the inſtruction of others; and that having received a greater knowledge of the will of God, they would be treated with greater ſeverity if they did not perform it. III. He warns them, that great troubles would ariſe in the world upon the account of his doctrine. IV. He laments the blindneſs of the Jews, who did not acknowledge that the time of the Meſſiah was come; and he exhorts them to lay hold of that opportunity, and to reconcile themſelves with God whilſt it was in their power.

REFLECTIONS.

LET us learn from hence, I. That ſince we are ignorant when Chriſt will come, and may be called every moment to give up our accounts to him,

him, we ought always to watch, and to apply ourſelves inceſſantly to our duty, to the end, that when he comes he may find us employed in well-doing. II. That thoſe to whom God has given the knowledge of himſelf, and chiefly the miniſters of the church, are bound to uſe it for the good of others; and to the glory of their maſter, if they would not be puniſhed as unfaithful ſervants; that, in general, he who knows the will of God, and does it not, ſhall be treated with greater ſeverity, and that God will require a greater account of thoſe, to whom he ſhall have granted more light and more grace. III. What our Lord ſays, that he was come to kindle fire and diviſion in the world, does not ſignify that he came with ſuch a deſign, nor that the goſpel tends to ſet men at variance; ſince on the contrary, the coming of Jeſus Chriſt, and the goſpel, have no other end, but to cauſe peace to reign: but his meaning was, that mankind by their malice would take occaſion from his doctrine to hate and perſecute one another. Our Lord warns his diſciples of this, that they might not be ſtaggered when the thing ſhould come to paſs; wherefore neither ought we to be any more ſurprized, when we ſee that troubles ariſe in the world upon the account or pretence of religion. IV. Jeſus told the Jews, that they might eaſily diſcern the time of the manifeſtation of the Meſſiah was come; but we have much more reaſon to be convinced of this truth, becauſe every thing that has happened ſince that time, has tended to confirm it. We ſhould therefore be entirely inexcuſable if we did not make a better uſe than the Jews did of the happineſs we enjoy in living at a time when the mercy of God is ſo clearly revealed; and haſten to make our peace with him, and to prevent his judgments, before we are called to appear in his preſence.

CHAP. XIII.

I. OUR Lord exhorts the Jews to take warning from that which happened to certain *Galileans*, whom *Pilate* had put to death whilst they were offering their sacrifices, and from those eighteen persons who had been killed by the fall of a tower. II. To this end he proposes the parable of the barren fig-tree. III. He cures a woman that had been ill eighteen years, and so bent that she could not stand upright. IV. He proposes the similitude of a grain of mustard-seed, and of leaven. V. Answers the question that was asked him, whether there were but few that would be saved; exhorts us to enter betimes into the way of salvation, and foretels, that the unbelieving Jews, who had not improved by his presence, should be shut out of the kingdom of God, whilst other nations should be admitted into it. VI. Being informed that *Herod* sought his life, he declares, he did not fear that cunning and artful prince; tells them, his ministry was drawing towards a conclusion, and that he should really be put to death in a short time; but that he should suffer death in *Jerusalem*, and not in *Galilee*, where *Herod* reigned: upon which account he deplores the ingratitude, obduracy, and destruction of that city.

REFLECTIONS.

CHRIST teaches us in this chapter, that we must not imagine, that those who have some great misfortune befal them, are always the most criminal; nor that those are better than others whom God is pleased to spare; but that he often bears with the guilty for wise and good reasons, whilst he afflicts others who are not so great sinners as they: wherefore, instead of condemning those whom

God

God visits, and flattering ourselves, we ought to repent and grow better by the misfortunes that happen to them, lest we should be handled more severely than they. The meaning of the parable of the barren fig-tree was, that God, who had already shewn great patience towards the Jews, did then make use of the last means for their conversion, by causing them to be called to repentance by Christ himself; after which they were to be destroyed, as it actually happened in a few years. This parable sets before us God's patience towards sinners, making use of the most efficacious methods to bring them to repentance; but that by their obstinacy and impenitence, they draw upon themselves the utmost miseries. Christ having healed a woman that went double for eighteen years together, there were some who were offended at his doing this miracle on the sabbath-day. What Christ says to convince them of their ignorance, as well as of their wickedness, teaches us, that the practice of charity and good works is the most necessary thing in religion; that these duties are always in season; and that we should let slip no occasion of discharging them, though there should be people of so evil a disposition as to be offended at them. The parables of the mustard-seed, and of the leaven, signify, that though the gospel was received by very few, whilst our Saviour was in the world, and the beginnings of his kingdom were very weak, it should be established in all places, and in a very short time; as it fell out accordingly: which proves the divinity of the gospel. We ought carefully to meditate upon the answer which our Lord returned to those that asked him, whether there would be but few people saved: *Strive*, says he, *to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* These words teach us, that instead of

put-

putting vain and curious questions about any thing which God has reserved the knowledge of to himself, and particularly about the salvation of others, our principal care ought to be to attain it ourselves; that we ought to take continual pains for it, and to begin early; that when the opportunity is lost, we shall not be admitted any more; and that then, all that will remain to the wicked for their part, will be nothing but remorse and despair, to see themselves excluded from the blessings of heaven through their own fault. We have seen that our Lord feared neither the craft nor cruelty of *Herod*, because he knew that he was not to die in *Galilee*, but at *Jerusalem*. This shews us, that wicked men cannot always execute their own designs, much less hinder what God has purposed, and that we need fear nothing when we walk in our calling. Lastly, the tenderness wherewith our Lord laments the ingratitude and destruction of *Jerusalem*, by saying, that he would have screened the Jews from the judgments of God, but they would not; shews very plainly, that God has no other views nor designs, with regard to men, but those of love; and that no evil befals them but what they bring upon themselves, by despising his goodness, and by slighting and rejecting the offers of his grace.

CHAP. XIV.

I. OUR Lord dining with a Pharisee cures a dropsical person; and proves, that men ought not to be offended because that miracle was done on a sabbath-day. II. He gives lessons of humility and charity to those who sat at table with him. III. He proposes to them the parable of the feast, to which those that were invited would not go. IV. He declares, that those who would be his disciples, should be

be ready to forſake all that was moſt dear to them, and even their lives; and ſhews, by two ſimilitudes, the neceſſity of that duty.

REFLECTIONS.

THE cure which Chriſt granted to the man that had the dropſy, ſhews, that he was always ready to do good and to relieve the afflicted; and that there was no ſort of diſtemper which he did not cure; and what he ſaid to thoſe who did not approve of his working miracles upon the ſabbath-day, ſhews, that we muſt avoid hypocriſy and raſh cenſures, and lay hold upon all occaſions that offer, to do works of kindneſs and charity. The ſecond leſſon relates to humility and charity; Chriſt recommends both thoſe duties, when he tells us, that they who endeavour to exalt themſelves ſhall be abaſed before God, and even before men; whilſt thoſe that humble themſelves ſhall be exalted: and when he exhorts us not to imitate thoſe worldly people, who only welcome the rich and their friends, but deſpiſe and neglect the poor and unfortunate. The parable of the feaſt, ſignifies, that the Jews, and eſpecially the chief among them, were to be rejected for not embracing the invitations which God made them by Jeſus Chriſt and his apoſtles; and that thoſe who were the moſt deſpiſed, and even the *Gentiles* themſelves, ſhould receive thoſe favours which the Jews had rejected. This alſo relates to Chriſtians who do not anſwer their call, and who, upon frivolous excuſes, and from the attachment they have to the things of the earth, neglect the offers of divine mercy, and by this means loſe the right they have to ſalvation. Laſtly, Chriſt warns us moſt expreſsly, that, in order to be his diſciples, we muſt firſt learn to renounce every thing that may hinder us from following him. It is with this view, that he propoſes the parable of a man

man that was going to build a tower, and that of one king who was going to fight with another. By which he teaches us, that we muſt not lightly or inconſiderately engage in his ſervice; and that before we aſſume the name of Chriſtians, and take that profeſſion and vow upon us, we ſhould examine ourſelves, and ſee whether we are firmly reſolved to be faithful to him; and whether we ſhall have the courage to reſiſt temptation, to bear our croſs, and uſe our utmoſt endeavours to bring others to faith and piety by our prudence and good examples.

CHAP. XV.

THE Phariſees being offended at our Saviour's eating with ſinners, he propoſes three parables to them. I. That of the loſt ſheep. II. That of the piece of money that was loſt. And, III. That of the prodigal ſon. His deſign was to ſhew by theſe three parables, that God calls ſinners to repentance, and that therefore the Phariſees were to blame to find fault with his keeping company with thoſe people.

Reflections.

THE three ſimilitudes contained in this chapter, tend all to the ſame purpoſe; which is, to ſet before our eyes the great mercies of God to ſinners, and his endeavour to bring them to repentance; and to ſhew, that as their converſion is very acceptable to him, and the holy angels are rejoiced at it, all ſuch as love God ought likewiſe to be glad, and even to contribute every thing in their power towards it; and not to be ſorry or jealous, as were the Phariſees, who could not bear to ſee Jeſus in the company of men of an evil life. This is what is chiefly denoted by the parable of the prodigal ſon, by whom our

Lord

Lord represents those that were great sinners, or counted such; the return of that son to his father's house, represents the conversion of such sinners. The tenderness with which his father received him, shews, that God takes pleasure in the repentance and amendment of sinners, and that he is full of goodness towards them. The jealousy and concern which the eldest son shewed, because his brother had been received so kindly and joyfully, represents the temper of those Pharisees who thought themselves better than other men, and who were offended at our Lord's eating and keeping company with publicans and sinners. This is the meaning of that instructive parable, which furnishes us with several very useful reflections. We there observe how sinners err from the right way, and their criminal abuse of the grace of God; we see, likewise, the goodness of God in chastising them, in order to bring them back to their duty; the return of those that come to God by repentance; the pardon which he grants them, and the joy that their conversion ought to excite in all pious and charitable minds. To this parable all of us ought most seriously to attend; reading it carefully over and over, and meditating upon all its parts; but sinners, especially, are bound to apply this parable to themselves, that they may be encouraged thereby to return to God by a speedy and sincere repentance.

CHAP. XVI.

I. CHRIST shews, by the parable of the unfaithful steward, the use we ought to make of the good things of the world. II. Next, he represents, that the love of riches is very dangerous; and reproves the Pharisees for their covetousness, and for opposing the establishment of the kingdom of God from the time of *John* the baptist. III. And lastly,

laſtly, to illuſtrate and confirm what he had ſaid about the uſe of riches, he adds the parable of the wicked rich man.

Reflections.

THIS whole ſixteenth chapter of St *Luke*, tends to teach us how we muſt uſe the good things of this world. What is here ſaid of this unfaithful ſteward, who, to make himſelf friends, diſcharged his maſter's debtors of part of what they owed him, muſt not be underſtood as if Chriſt commended the proceeding of that man, ſince ſuch an action would be a manifeſt injuſtice and breach of truſt. He only deſigned to teach us thereby, that as this ſteward raiſed himſelf friends by the goods of his maſter, before he left his ſervice, ſo we ought to ſecure for ourſelves an entrance into a better life, by employing our wealth to pious and charitable purpoſes. It is to ſtir us up to this duty, that Chriſt ſays, that thoſe who cannot make a right uſe of the corruptible things of this life, do thereby ſhew that they are unworthy to poſſeſs heavenly things. It is with the ſame view he declares, that we cannot ſerve God and ſet our heart upon riches at the ſame time; this he proves by the example of the Phariſees, who were covetous; and who, although they had a very high eſteem of themſelves, were abominable in the ſight of God, and the profeſſed enemies of his kingdom. But this is what he particularly aims at in the parable of the wicked rich man and *Lazarus*; whereby our Lord repreſents what happens to thoſe, who, inſtead of aſſiſting the miſerable, employ their wealth in gratifying their own luxury and ſenſuality. Our Lord plainly intimates, that pomp, effeminacy, a love of pleaſures, and a want of charity, lead men to hell and deſtruction, even without the commiſſion of great and enormous crimes. Beſides which, we

we ſee in this parable, that as the condition of men is very different in this life, ſo it will likewiſe be after death; and that we cannot judge of the happineſs or miſery of men, by what happens to them in this world; we diſcover, that the righteous enjoy ſweet repoſe after their death, whilſt the wicked are tormented; and that the condition of them both is unchangeable. The anſwer which the patriarch *Abraham* returned to the wicked rich man, who prayed him to ſend *Lazarus* to his brethren, is a leſſon to us, that God gives us, during this life, by his holy word, means ſufficient to avoid deſtruction; that thoſe who do not lay hold of theſe means, are without excuſe; that they muſt not expect that God ſhould work miracles for their converſion; and that although he ſhould, yet ſuch miracles will not convince them. All theſe inſtructions are of the utmoſt importance; and we can do nothing more uſeful than ſeriouſly to reflect upon them.

CHAP. XVII.

CHRIST ſpeaks, I. Of offences, of forgiving injuries, of the efficacy of faith, and of the obligation we are under to do what God commands us, without pretending to merit thereby. II. He cures the ten lepers. III. He anſwers the Phariſees, who aſked him when the kingdom of God ſhould come; and tells them, that the kingdom of God was already among them, though they did not obſerve it. IV. Hence he takes occaſion to warn thoſe that heard him not to follow falſe Chriſts; and to tell them, that the time would come, that they ſhould regret the loſs of thoſe advantages which they then enjoyed, and ſhould be overtaken by the judgments of God, as men were by the flood, and the inhabitants of *Sodom* were by the fire that deſtroyed them all.

REFLECTIONS.

THE instructions contained in this chapter, are the following: I. That the giving scandal or offence, is a great sin; that as men are made, it must needs be that offences come; but that those who are the occasion of them shall receive the punishment. II. That we ought not to bear any grudge against those that offend us, but that we must pardon them, and even pardon them always, though they should injure us very often. III. That faith being as necessary, in order to please God and obtain salvation, as it was formerly to work miracles, we should strengthen ourselves more and more therein, and, with the apostle, beseech the Lord to increase our faith. IV. That being the servants of God, we ought to do all that such a master commands us, and to do it with zeal, and, at the same time, with deep humility, remembering that we are but unworthy and unprofitable servants, that we do no more than part of our duty; that therefore we can plead no merit; and that if God vouchsafes to reward our obedience, it is in consequence of his pure favour and bounty. V. The principal reflection to be made upon the cure of the ten lepers, is, that there was but one who came back to thank Christ, and to give glory to God; and that this person was a *Samaritan*, who had more piety and gratitude than the rest, who were Jews. Men wish to be delivered when they are in pain or sufferings, but as soon as they have obtained what they desire, most of them presently forget the favour God has granted them, and become unthankful. Those who are sincerely affected with the mercies God bestows upon them, treasure them up in their memory, and express their acknowledgment and love to him, not only by continual thanksgivings, but chiefly by their obedience, and by the good use they

they make of his favours. What Christ said to the Jews, that the kingdom of God was not to come with splendor; that it was already come, and even was among them, is enough to shew, that the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is altogether spiritual and heavenly; and that those, who, like us, are so happy as to have this kingdom in the midst of them, should take care that they do not fall into the same sin as did the Jews, which was, not to acknowledge their happiness, nor to make a right use of it; which, nevertheless, is but too usual. For which purpose, let us consider what our Lord adds in this chapter, namely, that the Jews would soon repent their neglecting the advantage of his presence, and that they would be overtaken by divine vengeance, as the inhabitants of the first world were by the deluge, and as the fire from heaven overtook the people of *Sodom*. This warning concerns us as well as the Jews: those among us who have slighted the precious advantages we enjoy, and the season of God's forbearance and mercy, will be thus surprised in their blindness and security, and will perish in their impenitency. Since now our Lord has forewarned us of these things, let us reflect upon them continually; and, in expectation of his coming, let us live in watchfulness, in prayer, and in the exercise of every good work, as he himself advises.

CHAP. XVIII. 1—17.

I. OUR Lord proposes the parable of the unjust judge. II. That of the Pharisee and the publican. And, III. He lays his hands upon little children that were brought to him.

Reflections.

St *Luke* informs us, at the very entrance of this eighteenth chapter, that the end of the parable of the unjuſt judge, is to teach us, that we muſt pray always, and without fainting. This is what we learn by our Saviour's expreſſions; namely, that if men, and even men as wicked as that unjuſt judge, ſuffer themſelves to be overcome at laſt by prayers and repeated ſolicitations, God, who is righteouſneſs and goodneſs itſelf, will much more hearken to the prayers that are offered up to him with zeal and perſeverence. But the chief aim of our Lord, was to convince us thereby, that God hears the cries and prayers of his elect, and that he will take ſevere vengeance on all ſuch as unjuſtly oppreſs them. By the parable of the Phariſee and the publican, Chriſt would give us to underſtand, that ſuch who had a favourable opinion of themſelves, like the Phariſees, and deſpiſed others, were very odious to the Lord, by reaſon of their pride and hypocriſy; and that thoſe who are looked upon as the greateſt ſinners, become the objects of his mercy, when they are poſſeſſed with profound humility and ſincerely repent, like the publican who is here mentioned; who, ſtanding afar off, *would not lift up ſo much as his eyes unto heaven, but ſmote upon his breaſt, ſaying, God be merciful to me a ſinner!* Beſides which, the example of this Phariſee, who boaſted that he was neither an extortioner, nor unjuſt, nor an adulterer; that he faſted twice a week, and gave tithes of all that he poſſeſſed, but who was not juſtified before God, proves, that great and crying ſins are not the only hindrances of mens ſalvation; that men may be free from great crimes, and have even an appearance of piety, and yet be rejected by God, if their heart be filled with pride, covetouſneſs, or other ſecret paſſions. Laſtly,

ly, We may make three obſervations upon our Lord's laying his hands upon the children that were brought to him, and his praying for them. The firſt is, That the age of little children does not hinder our Lord from loving and bleſſing them. The ſecond, That in devoting them to God by prayer, and the ordinance of baptiſm, we conform ourſelves to what Chriſt did on this occaſion. The third, That the kingdom of God is only reſerved for ſuch as are children in innocence, meekneſs, and ſimplicity, and who receive the goſpel with ſuch holy diſpoſitions.

CHAP. XVIII. 18—43.

I. OUR Lord returns an anſwer to a rich young man, who aſked him what he muſt do to be ſaved. From whence he takes occaſion to ſay, that riches would obſtruct the ſalvation of many people; and he makes glorious promiſes to thoſe that will forſake worldly goods for the love of him. II. He foretels his ſufferings. And, III. He reſtores ſight to a blind man near *Jericho*.

Reflections.

WHAT we are to gather from the diſcourſe between our Lord and the rich young man mentioned in this chapter, is, I. That we cannot obtain everlaſting life, without keeping the commandments of God. II. That there are certain ſeaſons wherein we are bound to forſake all we have, and expoſe ourſelves to poverty and perſecution. III. The ſurpriſe and ſorrow that ſeized this young man, after hearing what Chriſt had ſaid to him, verifies our Saviour's remark upon this occaſion, that the good things of this life are often a great obſtacle to our ſalvation; becauſe, thoſe who have them, commonly ſet their heart upon them. Whence it appears,

IV. That if we be not called, as were the apostles, to leave all things to follow Christ, we ought to avoid setting our affections upon the perishable things of this life, and employ them in assisting the miserable; and then we shall partake, both in this life and the next, of the rewards that our Saviour promises those that shall have renounced the love of riches. It is next to be observed, that in proportion as the time of our Saviour's death drew near, he spoke more plainly of it to the apostles, to the end they might be less surprised at it: But the apostles, notwithstanding what he had said to them on several occasions, could not comprehend that he was to die; which proceeded from their prejudices, and the opinion they had taken up, that, as the Messiah, he was to reign gloriously here upon earth. It must be observed, upon giving sight to the blind man here spoken of, that Christ, by curing this man, who stiled him the son of *David*, which was another name among the Jews for Messiah, proved that he was really the Messiah. Lastly, Christ wrought new miracles towards the end of his life, and as he drew near to *Jerusalem*, in order to give fresh proofs of his divine mission to his disciples, and to the people; and in order also to lessen the offence which his cross and his death was quickly to give them.

CHAP. XIX. 1—28.

THIS part of the chapter comprehends two heads. I. The history of the conversion of *Zaccheus*. II. The parable of the ten pieces of money.

Reflections.

THERE are three things chiefly to be observed in the history of *Zaccheus*. The first, That Jesus

Jesus Christ came to call sinners to repentance; and that those persons whom the Jews looked upon as great sinners, and with whom they would keep no correspondence, such, for instance, as the publicans, should be received into covenant with God. The second, That Christ communicates himself to those that seek him; and that when he offers himself to us, and calls us to him, we should obey his call with readiness and joy, as *Zaccheus* did. The third, That those who are possessed of ill-gotten goods, ought to restore them; and, that the rich are particularly obliged to be charitable to the poor. As for the parable of the man that was going a long journey, and left ten pounds, that is to say, several sums of money in the hands of his servants; our Lord proposed it, as St *Luke* observes, I. To undeceive those that thought he would be declared king, and that his kingdom would be attended with worldly pomp and splendor. And, II. To make them comprehend that he should be rejected; but, that such as would not submit themselves to him, should feel the effects of his power, and undergo the punishment of their rebellion; whilst those that have served him faithfully shall be exalted to great glory. The use we are to make of this parable, is to observe from thence, first, that God grants us his light and grace, to the end that every one of us, according to his station, may improve them to his glory, and to the salvation of others. Secondly, That some make a right use of his grace, and others abuse it. Thirdly, That when our Lord shall come to judge mankind, he will gloriously reward those that shall have employed his gifts in the manner most agreeable to his intentions, but will punish with rigour and justice, the ingratitude and treachery of those that have abused them.

CHAP. XIX. 29—48.

I. CHRIST makes his royal entry into *Jerusalem*. II. He weeps for the destruction of that city. III. He drives out of the temple those that profaned it.

Reflections.

CHRIST was pleased to make his entry into *Jerusalem*, the *Sunday* before his death, to shew that he was that king spoken of by the prophets; but he did it after a very plain manner, riding upon a young ass, that it might appear that his kingdom was not of this world. This circumstance must have made the greater impression upon the apostles, as Christ, telling them where they should find the ass, had given them a new proof of his infinite knowledge. We ought very seriously to reflect upon this event, in which we so sensibly perceive the glory of Jesus Christ, and, at the same time his perfect meekness; and it should engage us to rejoice, and praise the Lord, as did those who formerly attended Christ, when they saw his miracles, if we duly consider what our Saviour has done to redeem mankind, and establish his kingdom in the world. We are next to observe, that when our Saviour came in this manner to *Jerusalem*, he lamented with tears the desolation of that city, and the calamities that were soon to fall upon the Jews, because they had mistaken and neglected the time of God's gracious visitation. This was a very plain proof of the goodness of the Lord, even to such as had rejected him; and who, that very week, were to crucify him; and it shews us likewise, that none perish but through their own fault, and because they do not lay hold of the season in which God visits them, and offers them his grace; and that

that therefore we ſhould know the things that belong to our peace before they be hid from our eyes. Laſtly, Chriſt, by driving out of the temple thoſe that ſold and traded in it, made appear his divine authority, as well as his great zeal. This action of our Saviour ſuggeſts two reflections: one is, that we grievouſly offend God, and expoſe ourſelves to his wrath, when we behave ourſelves irreverently in places ſet apart for public worſhip, and when our worſhip of him is falſe and hypocritical: this is infinitely more odious to him than the abuſe that was introduced among the Jews, of buying and ſelling in the temple the things neceſſary for ſacrifices. The other is, that we ought, in imitation of our Saviour, to oppoſe impiety and irreligion, and promote with zeal the glory of God, and the cauſe of religion.

CHAP. XX. 1——18.

I. CHRIST anſwers the chief among the Jews, who examined him whence he had his authority. And, II. Propoſes to them the parable of the huſbandmen.

REFLECTIONS.

WE are to remark, that when the Jews demanded of Chriſt whence he received his authority, our Lord, knowing that this queſtion did not proceed from a ſincere deſire to be informed, but only from a deſign to ſurpriſe him, did not think proper to anſwer them. But to convince them that their ignorance was affected and malicious, and that they might eaſily have diſcerned that his authority came from God; he aſked them whether the baptiſm of *John* was from heaven, or of men; to which they made no reply, not daring to ſpeak their thoughts. The ſilence of the Phariſees was a ſufficient proof of their

hypocriſy

hypocrisy and malice, and that a direct answer would not have satisfied them. God never refuses to reveal himself to those who have an honest heart, and sincerely desire to know the truth. But those who only seek a pretence to reject it, are given up to their ignorance and perverseness, especially when they have already had sufficient means of knowing the truth, and have rejected it. By the similitude of the husbandmen our Lord designed figuratively to represent, 1. That the chief of the Jews would crucify him, as their fathers had killed the prophets. 2. That he should nevertheless become the supreme head and king of the church. 3. That the Jews would shortly be overtaken with God's judgments, and deprived of his covenant. 4. That the gospel would be preached to the Gentiles with surprising success, and that they should enjoy all the privileges of being in covenant with God. This prophetic parable was clearly explained in the glory to which our Lord, after his resurrection and ascension, was exalted, by the destruction of *Jerusalem*, the dispersion of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles. However, that which befel the Jews, ought to be an example to us, and teach us, that Christians who despise God's grace, and disobey the gospel, shall not go unpunished, since they no less reject Christ, than the Jews themselves did formerly.

CHAP. XX. 19—47.

THE second part of this chapter contains the four following heads. I. The answer of Jesus Christ to the question, whether it were lawful to pay tribute to the emperor. II. His answer to another question of the Sadducees about the resurrection. III. The question he himself put to the Pharisees, concerning the Messiah's being called the son of *David*.

IV. A

IV. A warning to take care of the ſcribes and Phariſees.

REFLECTIONS.

THE deſign of the Phariſees, in aſking our Saviour whether it was lawful to pay tribute to the emperor, was to lay a ſnare for him. They wanted a pretence to accuſe him either of being an enemy to *Ceſar*, if he ſhould ſay that tribute was not to be paid; or no friend to his own nation, if he ſhould ſay it was. But Jeſus, by his profound wiſdom, diſcovered and avoided the ſnare; bidding them *render to Ceſar the things which are Ceſar's, and unto God the things which are God's.* Let us learn from hence, to ſubmit to the authority of princes, ſtrictly paying that obedience and allegiance which is due to them; and at the ſame time religiouſly diſcharging our duty to God. We may obſerve the ſame wiſdom in his anſwer to the Sadducees, who thought to have puzzled him by their queſtion about the reſurrection. He lets them know, that their queſtion was trifling, ſince after the reſurrection we ſhall be immortal, and like unto angels, and that there will be no marrying in the next life. Then he ſhewed them that the dead muſt riſe, by putting them in mind, that God declares himſelf the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, even after their death; whence it follows, that ſince God is not the God of the dead but of the living, thoſe holy patriarchs, and all thoſe who imitate their faith, ſubſiſt after death, and that they ſhall riſe again. This diſcourſe of our Lord, ought fully to convince us, that the dead will be raiſed, and ſhould engage us to live pure and godly lives; to the end that, as our Saviour ſays, we may be in the number of thoſe who ſhall be thought worthy to partake of eternal life, and of the reſurrection of the righteous. The queſtion which Chriſt put to the ſcribes, how the Meſſiah could be both the

the ſon and lord of *David*, tended to ſhew them, that the dignity of the Meſſiah was much greater than they imagined; and though they thought themſelves the beſt interpreters of the ancient prophecies, their ignorance was very great in this and many other inſtances. Nevertheleſs, he would not explain that queſtion to them more fully, becauſe it would have been uſeleſs, by reaſon of their unteachable temper. Thus does our Lord give up to their own ignorance thoſe who will not be inſtructed. What our Saviour ſays againſt the ſcribes and Phariſees, ſhews, that covetouſneſs, pride and hypocriſy, are moſt odious vices; and that we ought to beware of thoſe in whom they are found, and moſt carefully avoid the ſame vices ourſelves.

CHAP. XXI.

THIS chapter contains four things. I. The judgment which Chriſt paſſed upon the poor widow's offering. II. What he ſaid to his diſciples concerning the ſigns which ſhould precede the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the end of the world. III. He repreſents how terrible this deſtruction would be. IV. He exhorts his diſciples to watch and pray, and live ſoberly, that they might not be ſurpriſed by his coming.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THE judgment which Chriſt paſſed upon the offering of that widow, who threw two ſmall pieces of money into a box, in which private perſons put what they had a mind to give for the ſervice of the temple, teaches us, that what we devote to pious and charitable uſes is pleaſing to God, when given with a willing mind; and that the offerings of the poor, when made heartily, and according to their power, are

are as well received as those of the rich. II. We are to consider, that whatever our Lord had foretold of the signs that should precede the destruction of *Jerusalem* and the temple, came to pass at the time, and in the manner he had foretold. Several false teachers appeared, who took upon them the name of the Messiah; *Judea* was ruined by war, by famine, and by pestilence; the disciples of our Lord were persecuted by the Jews; the *Romans* besieged and took *Jerusalem*, and destroyed both it and the temple; the inhabitants of the city were reduced to the utmost extremity, were put to the sword, and exposed to all the dreadful calamities of war. The remains of this people were dispersed over all the world, and are so to this day, and *Jerusalem* never recovered from its ruins. And all these things came to pass at the time Christ had foretold, that is, about forty years after his crucifixion. Such clear and express predictions as these, which have been and still are so exactly verified by the event, will not suffer us to doubt that Christ was sent from God, and that his doctrine is truly divine. This destruction of God's once favourite people, and of a city which he had chosen to place his name in, ought to inspire us all with fear; and as this destruction can be ascribed to nothing but their sin in rejecting and crucifying our Lord; this was a proof that he was the Messiah. Thereby we may also discover what Christians are to expect, who reject him by their unbelief and disobedience. What we read in this chapter should remind us of the end of the world, and the day of judgment; of the horror and despair of the wicked, and the joy of the righteous at that day. Lastly, Our Lord informs us, that the way to be prepared for his coming, is to live soberly, and to watch and pray continually. This is what our Lord exhorts us to in the following expressions, which conclude this discourse: *Take heed*

to

to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the son of man.

CHAP. XXII. 1—38.

THE evangelist begins here the history of Christ's passion; and relates, I. The agreement *Judas* made with the Jews to betray our Lord. II. How Christ celebrated the passover, and instituted the holy sacrament. III. His prediction of the treachery of *Judas*. IV. What he said to the apostles, when they disputed who of them should be greatest in their master's kingdom. V. Our Lord's foretelling St *Peter*'s fall and repentance, and warning his disciples of his approaching death.

Reflections.

THE first reflection to be made here, relates to the resolution *Judas* took of betraying his master to the Jews: and though Jesus gave him to understand that he knew his design, this perfidious disciple would not desist from putting it in execution. As it was the love of money which induced him to commit this treacherous action, we see plainly that this passion, which men are apt to think not very dangerous, blinds men, and hardens their hearts to such a degree, as renders them capable of the worst of sins, and proof against all arguments to the contrary. II. Our Lord's keeping the passover with his disciples, and instituting the blessed sacrament, suggest these two reflections; first, that he observed to the end of his life all that was prescribed in the Jewish law; which should be an argument with us not to neglect

neglect or despise any divine institution: and secondly, that we should reverence and respect this holy sacrament which our Saviour then appointed to remain, even to the end of the world, a memorial of his passion and death, and ought to partake of this holy sacrament with true devotion, as often as we approach the Lord's table. III. It is to be observed, that our Lord's speaking at his last supper of the coming of the kingdom of God, gave occasion to his disciples to ask him which of them should be the greatest in his kingdom, which they supposed would be a temporal one. But Jesus exhorted them to correct their carnal notions of his kingdom, and to entertain more humble thoughts; promising, however, to exalt them to great glory if they continued faithful unto the end. These lessons of humility and renunciation of worldly greatness, which Christ gave his apostles so often, teach us, that it is not lawful eagerly to seek after honour and glory; but, as we are the disciples of a master who was humility itself, we ought not to think of being raised one above another; and should ever remember, that the true glory to which we should aspire, 'is that which Christ reserves in the kingdom of God for such as shall have been faithful to him, and continued obedient in the midst of those temptations and trials to which they shall have been exposed. Our Lord foretold that St *Peter* would deny him; but he assured him at the same time, that he had prayed for him, that his faith should not fail. The sequel confirmed the truth both of the prediction and promise. We are extremely weak; know but little of ourselves; and our greatest danger arises from presumption: but that which either secures us from falling, or raises us up again, is a prudent distrust of ourselves, and reliance on the grace of God. Let us therefore with great humility and fervency implore this grace, and

pray

pray to God that he would vouchsafe to secure us against our own weakness, and support us in such manner that our faith may not fail.

CHAP. XXII. 39—71

I. CHRIST's agony in the garden. II. He is taken by *Judas*. III. St *Peter* denies him, and afterwards weeps bitterly for his sin. IV. Jesus is condemned before the Jewish council.

Reflections.

IN the relation St *Luke* gives of our Lord's sufferings in the garden, we may observe the great sorrow of his soul, his prayers to God, and his resignation. The anguish and trouble he endured, shew that he was subject to all the infirmities of our nature; the prospect of his approaching death filled him with sore amazement; he even needed an angel to strengthen him; but this trouble and anguish had nothing in it but what was innocent; and therefore we must not imagine his sufferings were like those of the wicked, or that God was angry with him: his prayers teach us to seek our comfort and strength, by addressing ourselves to God under affliction; and his resignation to the will of his father, should teach us to submit ourselves in all things, even in the sorest trials, to what God shall be pleased to do with us. After a state of distress, like that of our Saviour, we should never be discouraged in our afflictions, if, like him, we resign ourselves intirely to the divine will. II. From the manner of our Saviour's being apprehended, we may observe, that though he knew the design of *Judas*, and could have escaped death, yet he delivered himself into the hands of the Jews; being resolved to die, that he might fulfil the will of his father. III. The action of St *Peter*, who

who ſmote with a ſword one of the ſervants of the high prieſt, ſhews the concern which that apoſtle had for his Maſter, but it proceeded likewiſe from a raſh and inconſiderate zeal, and a ſpirit of revenge, on which account our Lord blamed him for it. This teaches us, that violence and revenge are diſpleaſing to Chriſt, and unworthy of his diſciples; wherefore we ought to ſhun them, and always imitate the great meekneſs and patience of our Saviour, who being able to puniſh thoſe that came to take him, and to defend himſelf againſt their attempts, would not do it, but even gave a proof of his goodneſs as well as of his power, by healing the perſon St *Peter* had wounded. IV. We find here that St *Peter*, who after he had expreſſed ſo great a zeal for his Maſter, for fear of death denied him three times. The fall of this apoſtle is a proof of our great weakneſs, and how eaſily we may be ſurpriſed by temptation, when we neglect the duties of watchfulneſs and prayer. However, this apoſtle recovered from his fall, while *Judas* fell into incurable deſpair. Sins which men fall into merely by ſurpriſe, are eaſier repented of than thoſe which are committed obſtinately and deliberately. Laſtly, The relation of Chriſt's appearance before the council of the Jews, ſhews, that he was not condemned for any crime, and that he was wholly innocent, ſince the ſentence of his condemnation was only grounded upon what he himſelf had ſaid, that he was the Son of God. However, he owned the ſame, and ſubmitted to ſo unrighteous a judgment; whereby he has given us the moſt convincing proof imaginable of his love, and an example of zeal and patience, which we ought always to ſet before our eyes.

CHAP. XXIII. 1—25.

I. CHRIST appears, and is accuſed before *Pilate*, and afterwards before *Herod*, and by both of them is declared innocent. II. *Pilate* endeavours to deliver him: But, being at length overcome by the importunity of the Jews, he condemns him to death.

Reflections.

I. WE obſerve, at firſt ſight, the injuſtice and malice of the Jews, who, after they had themſelves condemned our Lord, falſly accuſed him before *Pilate*, of attempting to raiſe a ſedition among the people, and to make himſelf a king; and who, in ſpite of all that *Pilate* could ſay to pacify them, were ſo deſirous of his death, that they choſe rather to ſave the life of a murderer and a rebel, than his. II. We find by this hiſtory, that God permitted *Pilate* to ſend Jeſus to king *Herod*, that, by this means, his perfect innocence might more evidently appear, ſince this prince alſo found nothing in him worthy of death. III. It is to be obſerved, that when our Saviour appeared before *Herod*, he did not ſpeak to him, nor return him any anſwer; becauſe the queſtions that prince put to him, did not proceed from any deſign of being better informed by him, but from a vain curioſity, and deſire of ſeeing ſome miracle wrought by him. God manifeſts himſelf to thoſe who with ſincerity ſeek after truth; but leaves thoſe in their blindneſs, who inquire after truth only out of curioſity and in a ſpirit of profaneneſs. IV. And above all, we ought to obſerve the injuſtice of *Pilate*, who was convinced that Chriſt was wrongfully accuſed; deſired to deliver him;

and

and could have done it; but was afraid to do it; and, after some resistance, condemned him in complaisance to the Jews. This is the manner of unjust judges, and in general, of all those that sin against light, and who pay a greater regard to men, and to motives of policy, interest, and ambition, than to what God, justice, and conscience, require of them. This example likewise shews, that it is to no purpose to have a few good thoughts, and a faint desire of doing our duty, and even to withstand temptation for a time, if we give way to it at last, but is rather an aggravation of one's fault: and therefore upon all occasions we are bound to follow the dictates of our conscience, without suffering any solicitations, or other reasons whatever, to withdraw us from our duty.

CHAP. XXIII. 26——56.

ST *Luke* relates, I. What happened when Jesus was led forth to be crucified, and whilst he was upon the cross, and his death. II. The prodigies that then happened. III. His burial.

REFLECTIONS.

THESE are the observations which we may make upon the several circumstances of our Lord's passion. I. We see by what he said to the women of *Jerusalem*, who were weeping for him, that at the very time when they were going so unjustly to put him to death, he was more sensible of the calamities that were coming upon the Jews, than of his own sufferings. This is a most pathetic example of meekness and patience, and ought to convince us of the perfect love of Christ, and induce us to pardon those who use us unjustly, and to be more concerned for others than for ourselves. III. This prayer, which

Chriſt made at the time of his crucifixion, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*, ought to inſpire us with the like noble ſentiments. III. Another circumſtance, and which is worthy of our attention, is what St *Luke* relates about the two thieves that were crucified with our Saviour. In one of them, we ſee a terrible inſtance of obduracy; which ſhews how far men may carry their impiety and wickedneſs: but in the other, who reproved his companion, and called upon Jeſus as his Saviour and King, though he ſaw him nailed to the croſs, we may remark a wonderful faith, a hearty repentance, and a profound humility. In the promiſe our Lord made him: *This day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe*, we have an inſtance of God's mercy to penitent ſinners, which, however, muſt not be ſo abuſed, as to imagine that we may, without endangering our ſalvation, put off our converſion to the end of our lives. This promiſe does likewiſe aſſure us, that thoſe who die in the favour of God, do enter into a ſtate of happineſs immediately after their death. IV. Chriſt's death and burial are to be conſidered as the laſt degree of his humiliation, and the accompliſhment of that ſacrifice which he offered to God for the atonement of our ſins. Thus we find therein the foundation of our faith and confidence, and powerful motives not to fear death. Laſtly, We are to conſider, that the ſeveral prodigies which happened whilſt our Lord was expiring upon the croſs, were deſigned to ſhew that he was really the Son of God, which effect they actually produced upon the centurion who was appointed to guard the croſs, and all the people that were preſent, particularly thoſe who were his friends and followers in this life. But this is what appeared yet more plainly afterwards, when he aroſe the third day from the dead.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

I. CHRIST being riſen from the dead, angels firſt tell the news to the women that went to his ſepulchre. II. Afterwards he appeared to two of his diſciples as they were going to *Emmaus*. III. And at laſt, to the apoſtles. IV. St *Luke* concludes his goſpel, in relating the laſt orders which our Lord gave his apoſtles, and his aſcenſion.

REFLECTIONS.

ST *Luke* informs us in this chapter, that Chriſt being riſen, the women that went to his ſepulchre, received the firſt news of his reſurrection from the angels, and that afterwards he appeared to two diſciples, and laſtly to all the apoſtles; who were fully ſatisfied of his reſurrection, by converſing with him, by touching him, and ſeeing him eat in their preſence. Our Lord's appearing at ſeveral times to his diſciples, proves that he is riſen, and ought powerfully to ſtrengthen our faith and hope, which are built upon his reſurrection. In the diſcourſe which our Saviour had with the two diſciples in the way to *Emmaus*, we may perceive, that though they preſerved a tender remembrance of their Maſter, and had even ſome hopes of his riſing again, they did not yet believe it, and that their faith was as yet very weak; which proves that they did not believe the reſurrection without ſufficient grounds, nor till they were fully convinced of it. On the other hand, we obſerve, that Chriſt inſtructed them in the myſtery of his death and reſurrection, by explaining the prophecies relating to them. This ſhould induce us to read and meditate upon the prophets, ſince we find their predictions ſo proper to confirm us in the faith, eſpecially ſince the event has perfectly cleared up

and verified them. In the laſt commands that Chriſt left with his diſciples, we find an abſtract of the doctrine of the goſpel, which may be reduced to this: That Jeſus Chriſt died, that he roſe again, and that he ſent his apoſtles to declare throughout the world the remiſſion of ſins, and to perſuade men to repent. Laſtly, The aſcenſion of our Lord ought fully to convince us that he is the Son of God: and as the apoſtles, when they ſaw him aſcend into heaven, worſhipped him, and returned to *Jeruſalem* rejoicing and praiſing God; we ought alſo to worſhip him as our God and Saviour, to obey him, and to rejoice continually, whilſt we reflect on the glory to which he is exalted at the right hand of his father, and firmly hope to be one day received into his glory ourſelves. *Amen.*

The End of the Goſpel according to St LUKE.

THE

THE GOSPEL According to ST JOHN.

ARGUMENT.

The Gospel according to St John *was writ a long time after the other Gospels, about sixty years, it is thought, after the ascension of Christ. We meet in this Gospel, with several of our Lord's discourses and many remarkable particulars of his life, sufferings and resurrection, which are not related by the other three evangelists.*

CHAP. I.

THIS chapter has three parts. I. St *John* teaches us, that Jesus Christ is God; that he was made man, and came into the world to save mankind, and to make all those who believe in him the children of God. II. He relates the testimony which *John* the baptist bare of our Saviour, letting the Jews know the dignity of his person, and the nature of his office. III. Jesus makes himself known to *Andrew* and *Peter*, *Philip* and *Nathanael*.

Reflections *after reading the chapter.*

THE first part of this chapter instructs us in the infinite dignity of the person of Jesus Christ, and the end for which he came into the world. As for his person, St *John* teaches us, that Jesus Christ, who is here called the Word, is God; and that this Word was made flesh, that is to say, that Jesus was made man, and assumed our nature. Thus, one of the first and most important truths of Christianity, is to believe that Jesus Christ is both God and man. And the divinity of his person should convince us of the divinity of his doctrine, and make us acknowledge God's infinite love, in giving his own Son for our redemption. II. We see, that the end for which Christ came into the world, was, to be the light of the world, to enlighten mankind with the knowledge of God, and to purchase for them that should receive him, and believe in him, the right of becoming his children. We likewise learn, how great the excellence of the gospel is, and the obligation we lie under, of receiving with faith and thanksgiving, that wholsome doctrine preached by the only Son of God; and of shewing by our obedience, that we are his children by adoption. III. St *John* informs us, that *John* the baptist was sent from God to the Jews, to let them know who Christ was, and prepare them to receive him, not as a temporal, but as a spiritual King, and as a Saviour that should atone for the sins of mankind, and would pour upon them the gifts of God's holy spirit. It is for this reason, that *John* the baptist said, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.* And, *This is he which baptiseth with the holy Ghost.* The pardon of sins, and the power of the holy Ghost, which regenerates and sanctifies us, are therefore the two principal graces that Christ has acquired for us, and to which we

we are bound to aſpire. IV. We ought likewiſe to obſerve the humility, zeal, and faithfulneſs which *John* the baptiſt exerted, by owning that he was not the Meſſiah, but only his forerunner, and by abaſing himſelf ſo much below Jeſus Chriſt. Thus we ought likewiſe to entertain humble ſentiments of ourſelves, never ſeek our own glory, but that of Chriſt alone; and to labour every one in his calling; and, to the utmoſt of his power, to make him known to men, and to bring them to him. V. We ſee how Jeſus Chriſt, as ſoon as ever he entered upon his miniſtry, made choice of his diſciples; he did ſo, becauſe he deſigned to make uſe of them in preaching the goſpel throughout the world, and to the end they might bear witneſs to his life, his doctrine, his miracles, his death and reſurrection. The great joy of theſe firſt apoſtles, at finding the Meſſiah, and their earneſtneſs to follow him, teaches us, that our greateſt happineſs is to know Chriſt, and inviolably to adhere to him. Chriſt's commendation of *Nathanael*, ſaying, *Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom is no guile*, ought to be well obſerved. By that we ſee our Lord had a perfect knowledge of all things, and that the quality which he chiefly conſiders, and which he expects in his diſciples, is purity of heart, an upright intention, a great averſion to hypocriſy, and a ſincere love to truth and holineſs.

CHAP. II.

I. CHRIST changes water into wine at the marriage in *Cana*. II. He goes to *Jeruſalem*, and drives out of the temple thoſe that profaned it. III. He works ſome miracles in that city at the feaſt of the paſſover.

REFLEC-

Reflections.

THE miracle that Christ wrought, by changing water into wine at the marriage of *Cana*, has this remarkable circumstance, that it was his first miracle, and that he began by that to manifest his divine power and calling, in presence of the blessed virgin his mother, of his disciples, and several other persons, which caused his fame to be spread throughout *Galilee*, and his disciples to believe on him. II. For the same reason, when he came to *Jerusalem*, he drove out of the temple those who bought and sold there. He did the same three years after, a little before his death. Christ acting thus in the temple, which he called his father's house, was pleased to give a proof, at the very beginning of his ministry, of his divine authority, and of his great zeal; which was taken notice of by the apostles, who applied to him these words: *The zeal of thy house has eaten me up.* What we are to learn from hence, is, to be filled with great zeal for the glory of God, to oppose every thing that is contrary to it, and to shew a respect for the places that are devoted to the service of God; and, in general, for all that belongs to religion. III. It is to be observed, that the Jews required of Christ some proofs of his authority: whereupon he told them; *Destroy this temple, and I will build it again in three days.* By which he meant, that the strongest proof he could give of his receiving his authority from God, was, that he would rise from the dead the third day; but he spoke in figurative and dark terms: it not being proper, as yet, to speak more plainly concerning his death and resurrection. The last thing St *John* relates here, is, that several people believed in Jesus when they saw the miracles he did. But that Jesus *did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men:* —— And

knew

knew what was in man. We ought carefully to attend to this place, where it is ſaid, that Chriſt knows all men, and all that paſſes in their hearts; and, particularly, that he does not look upon all thoſe who call themſelves Chriſtians, to be his true diſciples. Thus we muſt not pretend to be acceptable to him, unleſs the profeſſion we make of believing in him be ſincere, nor unleſs we ſhew the truth of it by our obedience.

CHAP. III.

IN this chapter St *John* relates, I. The diſcourſe between Jeſus Chriſt and *Nicodemus*; in which, under the figure of a ſecond birth, and of water, he ſhews, that men muſt be wholly renewed, and inwardly ſanctified by the holy Ghoſt, if they would become his diſciples, and enter into the kingdom of heaven. II. Next he makes mention, after a figurative manner, of his death. He informs him of the deſign of his coming into the world, and ſhews what is the cauſe of the unbelief and perdition of men. III. *John* the baptiſt, informed by his diſciples that a great number of people followed Chriſt, expreſſes great joy at it, and declares openly, that Chriſt was infinitely more excellent than he; that he was the Son of God, and that none but ſuch as believed in him could be ſaved.

REFLECTIONS.

LET us learn from the diſcourſe that Chriſt had with *Nicodemus*, I. That carnal men cannot enter into the kingdom of God; and that, in order to be admitted there, we muſt become new creatures; and entertain thoughts and inclinations that will lead us to the knowledge of the truth, and to enquire after ſpiritual things. II. This may likewiſe teach us, that

that ſince it is by the ſpirit of God alone that we can be thus regenerated, we ought to implore fervently and continually the grace of that holy ſpirit, and make a right uſe of it when God ſhall grant it to us. III. Chriſt gives us here an abſtract of the goſpel, ſaying, That *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end, that whoſoever believeth in him may not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* Theſe words, and thoſe which follow, ſhew plainly, that the gift which God has made to mankind of his Son, is the greateſt token he ever gave them of his love; that faith in Chriſt is the only means of being ſaved; and if there be any who do not believe, but reject the light of the goſpel, it only proceeds from their being addicted to ſin, and from a heart depraved and corrupted by their paſſions; but that thoſe who have a love to virtue, never fail to approve of the doctrine of Chriſt. From whence we ought to conſider, of how great importance it is to diveſt ourſelves of our paſſions, and to purify our hearts with a ſincere love of truth and virtue. We have heard the teſtimony that *John* the baptiſt gave of our Lord, by a pubic confeſſion that Jeſus was greater than he, and how great ſatisfaction he conceived, when he was informed, that the glory of our Saviour began to ſpread itſelf. Theſe are arguments of the profound humility and great zeal of that faithful forerunner of the Meſſiah; and thus we ought always to bear witneſs to the truth, and to ſeek not our own glory, but that of our Saviour, in ſuch manner, that the advancement of his kingdom, and the ſalvation of men, may be the principal object of our wiſhes, and beget in us the greateſt joy. We learn further, from this diſcourſe of *John* the baptiſt, that Chriſt being the Son of God, and having received from his father a power without bounds, it is only by faith, and by a ſincere obedience to his doctrine, that we can

can obtain ſalvation; and that thoſe who diſobey him, continue expoſed to condemnation and death. This is what is expreſſed in the laſt verſe of this chapter, by theſe words, which contain the ſubſtance of the chriſtian doctrine: *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life; and he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

CHAP. IV.

I. CHRIST going from *Judea* to *Galilee*, and paſſing through *Samaria*, diſcourſes with a Samaritan woman, and makes himſelf known to her; upon which ſhe believed on him, as ſeveral other Samaritans did afterwards. II. Arriving in *Galilee*, he heals the ſon of a nobleman of that country. For the better underſtanding this chapter, it muſt be obſerved, that the Samaritans were originally partly Jews, and partly Gentiles; that they worſhipped the true God in a temple built upon mount *Gerizim*, but that they did not ſerve him in the temple of Jeruſalem, nor in the manner which he had required; upon which account, there was great enmity between them and the Jews.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THE firſt reflection that is to be made here, is, that Chriſt, meeting with a Samaritan woman near a well, in his wiſdom and goodneſs made uſe of that occaſion to inſtruct her, and to bring her to the knowledge of the truth, by ſpeaking to her concerning himſelf and his doctrine, under the ſimilitude of water. The manner in which our Lord mentioned to her this ſpiritual water, and the wholeſome effects which it produces, is a leſſon to us, that the knowledge and grace of Jeſus Chriſt is the moſt precious

precious gift that God ever gave to men, and what we ought to desire with the greatest fervency. II. The second instruction is, that the grace of God, and his covenant, is no longer appropriated to one nation, or to one peculiar place, as was pretended both by the Jews and Samaritans; but that all men, without distinction, may be partakers of it. And, III That the true worship which God requires of us, is, not only that which is visible and external, but that of the heart; and that as he *is a spirit, they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.* IV. We see that the disciples of our Lord urging him to take some food, received this answer from him: *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me.* And to shew them that they should be ready to labour, as he did, in the conversion of sinners, he uses the similitude of an approaching harvest. Let us gather from hence, that there is nothing which we ought to take greater pleasure and satisfaction in, than in doing the will of God, and instructing our neighbour; and that all of us ought thus to employ ourselves with our utmost zeal. V. The conversion of the Samaritan woman, and several of the inhabitants of the town of *Sychar*, is an event which shews, that the Messiah did not come for the sake of the Jews only; but that other nations likewise were to be admitted to the benefits of his coming into the world. This conversion, and the eagerness of the woman to inform the inhabitants of her town of what had happened, and to bring them to Christ, is a lesson also to us, that we should receive with readiness the gospel when it is preached to us; and, moreover, contribute all that in us lies, to bring over our neighbour to the faith, by our exhortations, and by our good examples. Lastly, St *John* informs us, that Christ being returned into *Galilee*, healed there the son of a nobleman of *Capernaum*, by his word only, and

and though the ſick man himſelf was not preſent. Thus our Lord thought fit to give new examples of his power and goodneſs in that country, that he might make himſelf known to the Jews, and induce them to believe in him.

CHAP. V.

CHRIST cures a man that had been afflicted with the palſy thirty eight years. And as the Jews found fault with him for working this miracle on the ſabbath-day, he repreſents how unreaſonable they were to condemn him. The ſubſtance of what he ſaid on that occaſion, is as follows: He acquaints the Jews, that he wrought his miracles by the power of God; that they ought not to be ſurpriſed at his attributing to himſelf ſo much authority, and calling God his father; that he would do greater miracles; and that he would raiſe the dead; that he would judge the world; that he would beſtow eternal life upon ſuch as believed in him; and condemn all thoſe that ſhould reject him. Chriſt adds, that he did not deſire to be believed upon his bare word, that he was ſent by God; that the Jews might ſatisfy themſelves by the teſtimony of *John* the baptiſt, which had great weight with them; by the miracles he wrought, and by the predictions of *Moſes* and the prophets. Laſtly, He complains of the unbelief of the Jews, who would not have recourſe to him to obtain everlaſting life; and tells them, that this unbelief proceeded from hearts void of the love of God, and full of ſelf-love, and of the glory of the world.

REFLECTIONS.

I. WE diſcover, in the cure of the paralytic, whoſe hiſtory St *John* here gives us, the wonderful power of our Lord, who, by his word only,

only, entirely cured a man that had lost the use of his limbs for thirty eight years; which was as great a miracle as that which was done at the pool at *Bethesda*. We see that the Lord had compassion on this paralytical man, asking him, whether he desired to be healed, and at the same time actually healing him in an unexpected manner. Whence we may observe, that our gracious Redeemer is always disposed to communicate his favours to men, and to deliver them from their miseries; that he even prevents them, and offers his mercies to them; but that no body is admitted to partake of them, but those who desire them, and who, like the paralytical man, lay hold of those offers which Christ so graciously makes them. II. We should carefully attend to that which Christ said to this sick man: *Behold, thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.* This is a warning to those whom God has delivered from any infirmity, or any other misfortune, to avoid, for the time to come, falling into sin, for fear of obliging God to punish them more severely. The discourse in which Christ proves to the Jews, by several arguments, that he was sent from God, shews us, that our faith is built upon a solid foundation, upon convincing and incontestable proofs; to fortify ourselves therefore in the faith, we ought seriously to weigh the proofs contained in this chapter, and add to them those which the Jews had not at that time, and which are drawn from the resurrection of our Saviour; from the establishment of the Christian religion; and from the testimony of the apostles. Besides this general observation, we may make the three following particular ones upon this discourse of Christ. I. That God gave our Lord an unlimited power, which, as he exerted formerly in doing miracles, he will display yet more pompously when he shall come to raise the dead, and to judge all men, both the righteous

righteous and the wicked. We ought therefore to revere this power of the Son of God, to obey him, and to honour him, as we honour the Father, that we may be raised one day to life eternal, and not to condemnation. II. Since Christ alledges the testimony of the holy scriptures, and of *Moses* in particular, and exhorts the Jews to search and examine them, it follows, that we ought often to read, and carefully to meditate upon the writings of the Old Testament, as well as those of the New, since this is the way to be confirmed in the faith, and to obtain everlasting life. III. What Christ said to the Jews about their unbelief, and the cause of it, is a lesson to us, that if there be any people that will not come to our Lord to obtain life, the reason is, that they have not the love of God in them, and that they are slaves to their passions. Above all, Christ declares that the love of the world, and the glory of it, and the desire to be approved and well esteemed of by men, is one of the greatest impediments to faith and salvation.

CHAP. VI. 1—21.

I. CHRIST feeds five thousand persons with five loaves and two fishes. II. He walks upon the water to go to his disciples, and stills a tempest.

REFLECTIONS.

THE feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, was a miracle which the apostles did not expect, though they had been witnesses of so many other miracles. This miracle our Lord wrought as much to increase and strengthen their faith, and convince them of his almighty power, as to supply the necessities of the multitudes that followed him. This, therefore, is one of the most illustrious mira-

cles our Lord wrought, by reason of the great numbers that were witnesses of it. St *John* observes, that those people were so affected with this miracle, that they not only affirmed that Christ was the prophet, and the Messiah whom the Jews expected, but they would likewise have declared him king; for which reason he withdrew to a solitary place, being unwilling that any sedition or commotion should be raised for his sake. This proceeding of the *Jews*, was an effect of the opinion they had taken up, that the Messiah was to be a temporal king; but the retreat of Christ shewed that his kingdom was not an earthly one; which should teach us, not to seek our glory in this world; and, above all, to shun the pomp and splendor of the world, and to behave ourselves always with great humility. III. In the other miracle that our Saviour wrought in behalf of his apostles, and which must needs have made a deep impression on them, when he came to them walking upon the water, he gave a most convincing proof of his care and love for his disciples; suffering them to be exposed to a storm, that he might prove them, and afterwards deliver them in a manner more surprising, and fuller of comfort, than if he had been with them at first. Such is the issue of the trials and afflictions with which God visits those he loves; sooner or later he comes to their assistance; and the evils they are exposed to manifest his love to them, and increase their consolation and their joy.

CHAP. VI. 22—71.

I. OUR Lord and Saviour having miraculously fed the people with five loaves and two fishes, and observing their eagerness in following him, takes occasion from thence to exhort them to seek for spiritual food, and such as would make them

live for ever, rather than for bodily ſuſtenance. II. He then tells them, that he was that food, the true bread from heaven, and that thoſe who eat of that bread ſhall attain everlaſting life. III. He adds, by way of explanation of what he had before ſaid, that this food was his fleſh and his blood, which he would give for the life of the world: by which he hinted at the benefits of his own death; but he expreſſed himſelf figuratively, and ſomewhat obſcurely, becauſe he would not yet openly declare that he ſhould be put to death. IV. Some of his diſciples being offended at this diſcourſe, Chriſt tells them, that theſe words were to be underſtood in a ſpiritual ſenſe; but that did not hinder ſeveral among them from forſaking him.

Reflections.

THE firſt and chief inſtruction this diſcourſe of our Saviour furniſhes us with, is, to labour much more earneſtly to procure that food that cauſes men to live for ever, than that which only ſerves to ſupport a temporal and fading life. Our Lord has told us plainly, that he himſelf is this heavenly bread, and that this food of the ſoul is only to be found in him, and in his goſpel; and that the will of his father who had ſent him was, that all that believe in him ſhould have eternal life, and that he ſhould raiſe them up at the laſt day. What our Lord ſaid upon this occaſion was obſcure to thoſe that heard him. The Jews could not conceive how Chriſt was that bread that deſcended from heaven; and how it was neceſſary to eat his fleſh, and drink his blood, in order to obtain everlaſting life; but to us Chriſtians this ought to be very clear, foraſmuch as we know that the death of Jeſus Chriſt is the true food of the ſoul, and the only principle of ſpiritual life and immortality. He tells us himſelf,

that his words are ſpirit and life; that is to ſay, they are to be underſtood after a ſpiritual manner; and, that to eat the fleſh of Chriſt, and drink his blood, means nothing elſe, but to come to him, and to believe in him. Only it is neceſſary that this faith ſhould be ſincere, and attended with love, truſt, and obedience, and that it ſhould unite us ſo cloſely to Chriſt, that nothing ſhould be able to ſeparate us from him. The queſtion which our Lord put to his apoſtles, whether they would likewiſe forſake him, as divers of his diſciples had done; and St *Peter's* reply, Lord, to whom ſhould we go? oblige us to conſider, that Chriſt forces none into his ſervice; that the obedience he requires, is free and voluntary; that, however, we ought never to leave him, ſince he only has the words of eternal life; and that, being the Son of the living God, he is the ſole author of ſalvation. The laſt words of this chapter, where it is ſaid, that Jeſus knew from the beginning that *Judas*, who was of the number of the twelve apoſtles, would betray him; teach us, that our Lord knows all thoſe that call themſelves his diſciples, and that he diſcerns them who do not believe in him, from ſuch as are faithful to him. An external profeſſion of Chriſtianity is not ſufficient, and there is nothing but a true faith, and ſteady obedience, that can aſſure our heart before God, and make us accepted by him, who ſees the hearts of all men, and who will render to them all according to their works.

CHAP. VII. 1—30.

I. ST *John* relates here a journey that Chriſt made to *Jeruſalem* at the feaſt of tabernacles. II. The different judgments that men paſſed upon him. And, III. His anſwer to the Jews, who found fault with him for his having cured a paralytical perſon

ſon ſome months before, at the feaſt of the paſſover, upon a ſabbath day.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THE firſt thing to be obſerved in this chapter is, that our Lord refuſed to go publicly to *Jeruſalem*, and in the company of his relations: he acted thus out of prudence, that he might avoid all pomp, and that he might not be expoſed to the rage of the Jews, who ſought to put him to death. That which he ſaid to ſome of his relations, that *the world*, that is to ſay, the *unbelieving Jews, could not hate them, but hated him, becauſe he teſtified of it, that the works thereof were evil*; contains a certain truth, namely, that worldly people love thoſe that are like them, but hate thoſe whoſe lives and diſcourſes condemn their wicked actions. II. We ſee here the various judgments the people paſſed upon Chriſt; but, above all, we may obſerve the blindneſs and malice of the Jews, who, without minding the proofs which our Lord, by his miracles, gave of his divine miſſion, and without being moved with his mild, and, at the ſame time, ſtrong arguments, in vindication of what he had done, and to prove that his doctrine was from heaven, accuſed him of breaking the law of God, and of being poſſeſſed of a devil; and would even have put him to death. This proceedure of the Jews, who thus reſiſted and hardened themſelves, againſt the truth, ſhews, that prejudice and paſſion may blind men to ſuch a degree, that nothing can undeceive them; and, that they are even offended at thoſe things which tend moſt to their edification and confirmation. What our Saviour ſays on this occaſion, deſerves our particular attention: *If any man will do the will of my father, he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of myſelf.* Let us gather from hence this

this important leſſon, that the principal diſpoſition we ought to be in, in order to know the doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, and to diſcover the truth and beauty of it, is to have an upright heart, and a ſincere deſire to do the will of God, as far as it is and can be known to us; but, thoſe who are not thus diſpoſed, can never come to the knowledge of the truth. Laſtly, It likewiſe appears from this hiſtory, that though the Jews had formed a deſign of putting Jeſus to death, they could do him no harm, nor durſt any man lay hands on him. The wicked can hurt good men, only when, and as God is pleaſed to permit; and, whatever men may enterprize, the counſel of the Lord that ſhall ſtand.

CHAP. VII. 31——53.

THE Phariſees being enraged becauſe the people were affected at the diſcourſes and miracles of our Lord, ſent ſome perſons to ſeize on him; but, he continued to ſpeak with ſo much authority and evidence, and exhorted the people ſo pathetically, that ſeveral acknowledged him to be a prophet; and, that ſome even believed he was the Meſſiah; ſo that thoſe who were ordered to lay hold of him, returned, without daring to do it; at which the Phariſees were extremely irritated.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THE firſt thing we have here to obſerve, is, that the diſcourſes and miracles of Chriſt produced very different effects, foraſmuch as the people were extremely affected with them, and filled with admiration; whereas, on the contrary, the Phariſees were ſo provoked by them, that they would have cauſed our Lord to be apprehended. Thus we may ſee how differently the word of God is received; ſome

ſome open their eyes and their hearts to the truth, and grow better by it; others reject it, and proceed even to hate thoſe who propoſe it, and to be exaſperated againſt them. II. We may take notice, in the diſcourſes of our Saviour, with what evidence, meekneſs, and authority, he continues to apply himſelf to the Jews; and, eſpecially, admire thoſe kind invitations which he makes them, ſaying, *If any one thirſt, let him come unto me and drink.* Whereby he offers them his grace, and the gifts of the holy Spirit, which he was ready to pour upon them that ſhould believe in him. He likewiſe makes us the ſame offers in the goſpel. It is our buſineſs to receive them as we ought, and to embrace them with zeal and gratitude. III. We ought to reflect upon what St *John* ſays, that thoſe who were commanded to ſeize our Saviour, durſt not do it, but told them who ſent them, that *never man ſpake like this man.* By which we ſee, on one hand, the virtue and efficacy of the word of God; and, on the other, that God renders the deſigns of the wicked vain and uſeleſs whenever he pleaſes. Finally, it is very remarkable, that the Phariſees, inſtead of diſcovering that in oppoſing Chriſt they oppoſed God himſelf; and, inſtead of being moved at ſeeing ſo many people bearing witneſs to our Lord, were more and more enraged againſt him, and even againſt the people who ſpoke favourably of him and his doctrine. This is a proof, that the moſt learned, and moſt diſtinguiſhed in the eye of the world, are often leſs diſpoſed than the mean and ſimple to receive the goſpel; becauſe they are ſlaves to their paſſions, and, eſpecially, becauſe they are filled with pride, and a good opinion of themſelves, and do not endeavour ſincerely, and in the integrity of their hearts, to be inſtructed, and to know the truth.

CHAP. VIII. 1—29.

ST *John* relates here, I. The history of the woman taken in adultery. II. A discourse that Christ had with the Jews, in which he told them he was the light of the world, and that they ought to believe what he told them of himself. III. He reproaches them for their blindness and unbelief, and speaks about his departure out of this world, and his death; but does it in figurative terms, and such as they could not comprehend.

Reflections.

TO understand the history of the adulterous woman, and to make a right use of it, we must observe, I. That the design of the Pharisees in bringing this woman to Christ, was to ensnare him; for, if he had said that she ought not to be put to death, they would have charged him with breaking the law of God; and, if he had passed sentence of condemnation on her, they would have accused him to the governor, for violating the rights of the supreme magistrate. II. If Christ did not condemn that woman, it was not because her crime was not great, and worthy of death, but for prudential reasons, and to shew that he sought nothing but the salvation of sinners. III. It is particularly to be observed, that our Lord said to that woman, *Go thy way, and sin no more*; which shews, that he gave, on this occasion, a proof of his mercy towards sinners, but that he was far from excusing her crime; which may also teach us, that God does not pardon sinners, but upon condition that they will not relapse into their sins. In our Saviour's discourse with the Jews, we may consider, I. These remarkable expressions of our Lord: *I am the light of the world*;

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he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. These words ought to be continually meditated upon by Christians, and should strongly engage them to make a right use of that light which lighteth them, ever following Christ, and walking in the way which he has marked out for us by his doctrine, and by his example, and which will certainly lead us to life and immortality. II. As the Pharisees reproached our Lord with speaking too highly of himself, he said several things to cure them of their prejudices against him, and to engage them to believe that he spake to them from God. What the Saviour of the world said upon that occasion, should have greater weight with us, in convincing us that he is the Son of God, and that his doctrine proceeds from heaven; God having given authentic testimony thereof, not only by the miracles which our Saviour wrought, but likewise by what followed his death, his resurrection, and his exaltation to heavenly glory. Lastly, We have seen that the Pharisees did not improve by the instructions of our Lord, though he spake to them with so much meekness, and what he said was attended with so much evidence, yet that they continued still in their unbelief, and that Christ therefore told them, that they should die in their sins. Thus men, who are enslaved to the world, and to their passions, resist the evidence and force of truth when it is proposed to them; and, by refusing to believe in Jesus, and to obey him, they remain in their sins, and consequently in condemnation and in death.

CHAP. VIII. 30—59.

I. CHRIST exhorts those among the Jews, who had believed in him, to presevere in his doctrine, and promises them true liberty. II. He tells

the unbelieving Jews, who gloried in being free, and the children of *Abraham*, that they were not his children, since they did not imitate him in his faith; and reproaches them for their unbelief; at which they were so provoked, as to say very harsh things to him, and to attempt to stone him; but, he escaped their rage, and retreated from them.

REFLECTIONS.

IN this discourse our Saviour teaches us, I. That when we have the happiness of knowing him, and believing in him, we ought constantly to persevere in the truth, and adhere to it more and more; which, if we do, we shall be really his disciples, and enjoy that true liberty of the children of God, which consists, as our Lord has said, in being delivered from the bondage of sin. II. What he told the Jews, that they were not the children of God, nor of *Abraham*, since they did not imitate the faith of that patriarch, but that they were rather the children of the devil, since they did his works, has great weight in it. We may learn from thence, that the surest token whereby to discover the children of God, is, that they do his will, and that they love those whom God loves; but those that set themselves against the truth, and against such as declare it, are the children and imitators of the devil, who is a liar, a murderer, and an enemy of the truth. III. We likewise see in this discourse of our Lord, how happy those are who receive his doctrine, and submit thereto, since he declares that they are not under the power of death. IV. We may observe next, that though Christ spoke to the Jews with so much plainness and strength of argument, they, instead of benefiting by his instructions, were exasperated by them, and proceeded to such a degree of rage, as to call him a *Samaritan*, and a man possessed by the devil. This is an instance of

of the most deplorable blindness, and the blackest malice, and shews us how dangerous it is to abandon ourselves to our passions, and to fall into unbelief. Lastly, We have in this chapter a remarkable proof of the glory and divinity of Christ, by his declaring that he was before *Abraham*. The infinite dignity of his person ought to convince us so much the more of the divinity of the gospel, and our obligation to obey him, as he is our God and our Saviour.

CHAP. IX.

THIS chapter contains the history of a man that was born blind, who received his sight.

REFLECTIONS.

THE history contained in this chapter is very remarkable: besides the goodness and power of Christ, which evidently appear in his giving sight to the man that was born blind, as well as in all his other miracles, we see here three things well worthy our attention. I. The proceeding of the Pharisees, and the pains they took to deny this miracle: What they said for that purpose to the father and mother of the blind man, and afterwards to the blind man himself, to know whether he had been blind, and how he received his sight. The Pharisees, by all this enquiry, did not desire to find out the truth, but rather to stifle and oppose it; and, when they could not avoid seeing it, they rejected it, and slandered Jesus, the author of it; and at last, when they could say nothing against the certainty of the miracle, and were unable to answer the arguments of the man, they broke out into injurious language against him, and excommunicated him. In all this their proceedure

ceedure we may discover marks of the most violent passion, and of the most obstinate malice. Thus do the wicked shut their eyes against the truth, and are more and more hardened, even by those things which should affect and convert them; however, all the endeavours of the Pharisees to discredit the miracle, tended very remarkably to make it known, and prove the certainty of it. II. We may observe, in the discourse of the blind man, the ingenuity with which he spoke to the Pharisees, and confounded them, maintaining, that he had been well cured; and, since Christ had restored his sight to him, he could not be a wicked man and a deceiver, as they pretended. In reading this relation, we see the power of truth, and that the most simple persons do often judge better of things, than those who are thought to have more sense and knowledge; and, that God makes use of such people, to confound the wise men of this world. III. We see that Christ, knowing that this man had been excommunicated by the Pharisees for speaking the truth in their presence, made himself known to him, telling him, that he was the Son of God, and assuring him, that those who passed for the most learned, such as the Pharisees, should continue in their blindness, whilst such as were looked upon as ignorant, but who were humble and sincere, should benefit by his doctrine. Our Lord, we see, graciously receives those that love the truth, and that are persecuted by the world, and grants them new gifts and new graces, whilst those who are conceited of themselves, and obstinately reject the truth when it is offered to them, remain in their unbelief, and perish in their blindness.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

WHAT is here related happened at two different times: The first part of the chapter contains a discourse which our Lord had with the Jews, after he had cured the man that was born blind, in which he compares himself to a good shepherd. He speaks likewise of false shepherds, and of hirelings, by which characters he describes deceivers, and particularly the Pharisees. He says, that such people had nothing else in view but their own interest, and only sought to gratify their own pride and covetousness; whereas, he came into the world to procure the good and welfare of his sheep, and that he was willing even to lay down his life for them. Some months after, Jesus being at *Jerusalem*, at the feast of the dedication of the temple, and the Jews enquiring of him, whether he were the Messiah, he tells them, that his miracles shewed sufficiently who he was; that if they did not know him, it proceeded from the hardness of their hearts, but that his own sheep knew him; that he would give unto them everlasting life; and, that God would never suffer them to perish, since he and his father were one. The Jews, upon this, were going to stone him, because he took upon him the title of the Son of God; but our Lord, not being willing to speak openly to them concerning his divinity, contented himself with telling them, that since the scripture calls princes and magistrates Gods, he might very well assume the name of the Son of God without blasphemy, forasmuch as God had sent him into the world, and that his miracles plainly proved that he was so. After which our Saviour retired from *Jerusalem*.

Reflections.

THIS discourse of Christ, speaking of himself under the character of a shepherd, is much plainer to us than it was to the Jews, since we know perfectly that our Lord is the true shepherd, who gave his life for the sheep, that is to say, for all true believers; and, that he came to gather them all together, from Jews and Gentiles, into his church. Upon which we must acknowledge the infinite love of Christ, our good shepherd, who so tenderly loved his sheep, and who suffered death, to obtain life and salvation for them; and how great our happiness is, to be of the number of those sheep which he has redeemed by his blood, and for which he has purchased everlasting life. The second part of this chapter suggests to us four considerations. I. The first relates to the strange blindness and malice of the Jews, who, after so many miracles which Christ had wrought, and so many proofs that shewed he was sent from God, asked him whether he was the Messiah, and then would have stoned him for a blasphemer. Our Lord himself observes, that this unbelief of the Jews proceeded from their not loving the truth, and from their want of a sincere desire to know it. If therefore men do not profit by the doctrine of Christ Jesus, and in the midst of light are still in ignorance and error, it proceeds from the want of docility, and love of truth and virtue. II. The second observation is, that the token and character of our Saviour's sheep, that is to say, of his true disciples, is to hearken to the voice of their divine shepherd, to follow him, and to obey him. III. We see in this discourse of our Lord, that the happiness and salvation of true believers is certain, since he declares, *That he knows them, that he gives unto them eternal life, that they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his*

his hands. These words should fill all those that love the Lord Jesus with great comfort, and a firm expectation of that glory and felicity which is prepared for them in his kingdom. IV. Since our Lord says, at the end of this chapter, that he could justly take upon himself the title of the Son of God, this should fully convince us of his divinity, and the excellence of his office, especially as we are elsewhere assured that he is both God and man; which is the strongest motive to believe in him, and to pay him that obedience which is so justly due to him, on account of that authority he has over us, and his love towards us.

CHAP. XI.

THIS chapter contains the history of the resurrection of *Lazarus*.

REFLECTIONS.

THE following are the principal reflections to be made upon this history, which is one of the most remarkable of the whole gospel. I. That though our Lord had a great kindness for *Lazarus*, yet he did not go to *Bethany* till after he was dead, to the end, that the miracle of restoring him to life, might be much more illustrious than that of curing his distemper. Those whom God loves may be exposed to many evils; he even delays to come to their assistance, but he uses them thus, that his power and love may appear more plainly in their deliverance. II. We may observe, in what the sisters of *Lazarus* said to our Saviour, their piety, love, and adherence to Christ, and the great opinion they had of his power. We see, in particular, that they were fully persuaded their brother would rise at the last day. We have yet much greater reason than those two holy women to love our Lord, to put our whole trust

truſt in him, to expect all things from his power, and, particularly, to believe that the dead ſhall riſe again at the end of the world. III. The kindneſs with which Chriſt ſpake to the ſiſters of *Lazarus*, to comfort them, and to prepare them for the miracle which he deſigned to do; the concern he ſhewed, and the tears he ſhed when he ſaw *Lazarus* in the tomb, are very plain proofs, how much he loved theſe two women and their brother, and how charitable he was, and full of compaſſion. As far as we are affected with the misfortunes of other men, and ready to comfort the miſerable, we may be ſaid to have the ſpirit of Chriſt. But what is chiefly to be obſerved here, is, that our Lord reſtored life to *Lazarus*, after he had been four days in the grave. This great miracle, which Chriſt wrought but a few days before his death, and in the preſence of a great number of the Jews, ſeveral of whom believed in him, is one of the moſt illuſtrious proofs that he gave, during his whole life, that he was the Son of God. This miracle ſerves eſpecially to confirm the doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead, and the truth of what our Lord ſays in this chapter: *I am the reſurrection and the life: He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live.* IV. St *John* acquaints us, that the Phariſees, inſtead of being convinced by ſo illuſtrious a miracle, were ſo enraged to ſee the people declare for Chriſt, that they formed a deſign of putting him to death, which made him retire to a ſolitary place till the feaſt of the paſſover. Thus the enemies of our Lord grew more and more obſtinate, reſiſted to the very laſt the evidence of his miracles; and, every thing our merciful redeemer did to ſoften and prevail upon them, only ſerved to provoke them more againſt him. God permitted, however, the Jews to take the reſolution of putting him to death, to the end that, contrary to their deſign,

ſign our Lord might die, not only for the Jewiſh nation, but alſo to collect into one body all the children of God, and by that means eſtabliſh his doctrine and kingdom in the world.

CHAP. XII. 1—19.

I. MARY anoints our Saviour's feet. II. Several people come to *Bethany* to ſee Chriſt, and *Lazarus* that was raiſed. III. Our Lord makes his royal entry into *Jeruſalem*.

REFLECTIONS.

THERE are three things to be conſidered in the anointing of our Saviour's feet; the action itſelf; what judgment *Judas* paſſed upon this action; and what was ſaid by our Lord in defence of it. As *Mary* anointed him with precious ointment, after the manner of thoſe times, to teſtify her reſpect and love for him, we ought likewiſe to ſhew him our love and our zeal by all the means that are in our power, and which are moſt pleaſing in his ſight. The murmuring of *Judas*, who, being a thief, and a covetous man, complained that the price of that ointment was not given to the poor, proves very clearly, that the heart of this falſe diſciple was entirely corrupted. We likewiſe ſee by this inſtance, what power covetouſneſs has over thoſe whom it poſſeſſes, and how wicked men do ſometimes hide their paſſions under the veil of religion and piety. And what Chriſt ſaid in behalf of *Mary*, ſhews, that he vouchſafes to accept whatever is done for his honour, and particularly all acts of charity. II. The reſort of many people to *Bethany* to ſee *Lazarus*, whom our Lord had raiſed, and the reſolution taken by the prieſts to put *Lazarus* to death as well as Chriſt, is an argument of the truth of this miracle. It likewiſe ſhews, that

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the wickedneſs of the chief among the Jews was at the higheſt pitch, and that there was no more good to be expected from them. And, III. The acclamations of the people who attended him when he made his entry into *Jeruſalem*, is another proof of the reſurrection of *Lazarus*; ſince St *John* takes notice that the multitude bore witneſs that Chriſt had called *Lazarus* from the grave, and reſtored him to life. Our Lord was pleaſed, at that time, to receive the homage which he had before refuſed, and ſuffered himſelf to be publickly acknowledged for the Meſſiah. He appeared, however, on this occaſion, in great ſimplicity, his attendants being none but the common people, and he himſelf ſitting on an aſs, as the prophet *Zachariah* had foretold. All this was done, that none of the marks which the prophets had given of the Meſſiah might be wanting in him; and to ſhew that humility and meekneſs were his character, and that the kingdom he was going to eſtabliſh was a ſpiritual and heavenly kingdom. Now, if the diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, and the multitude, expreſſed their joy and gratitude by attending him into *Jeruſalem*, we are ſtill more engaged to adore our great redeemer, and bleſs God continually for the wonders he has done, and the many proofs he has given us of his power and his love.

CHAP. XII. 20——50.

ST *John* relates four things: I. What Chriſt ſaid when certain ſtrangers, that were come to *Jeruſalem* to keep the feaſt of the paſſover, deſired to ſee him. II. That God cauſed a voice at that time to be heard from heaven, and that upon the ſame occaſion our Lord diſcourſed concerning his death, and the eſtabliſhment of his kingdom, but that the Jews did not underſtand his words. III. St *John* obſerves,

ſerves, that though our Lord had wrought ſo many miracles, the Jews did not believe in him, and that this their unbelief had been foretold by the prophet *Iſaiah*. IV. And laſtly, the evangeliſt relates ſome exhortations which *Chriſt* made to the Jews before his death; in which he ſhews what would happen to thoſe that ſhould receive his doctrine, and to thoſe that ſhould reject it.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THE meaning of what our Saviour ſaid, when the ſtrangers deſired to ſee him, was, that he would quickly manifeſt himſelf to all men; but, that he was to die firſt, as wheat muſt be put into the ground and die, before it can bring forth fruit. Our Lord adds, that it ſhould be with his diſciples as with himſelf; that all thoſe who had a mind to follow him ought to prepare themſelves for ſufferings and death; but, that he would exalt thoſe that ſhould believe in him and ſerve him, to the ſame glory to which he was going to be exalted. The Jews did not comprehend this diſcourſe; but it is by no means obſcure to us. II. At that time Jeſus, under the terrors of his approaching death, prayed unto his Father, that he would manifeſt his glory in a wonderful manner, and ſhew that he was his Son. Upon which God cauſed a voice to be heard from heaven, declaring that what he had prayed for ſhould be accompliſhed. This voice from heaven was heard when our Saviour was going to be crucified, to take away the ſcandal of the croſs, and to convince them that he was really the Son of God. Whereupon our Lord declared, that the kingdom of Satan was going to be deſtroyed, and he ſhould ſoon draw all men to him, and that this would be one of the effects of his death. The event ſoon verified the divinity of this prediction. III. St *John* reflecting, in this chap-

ter upon the unbelief of the *Jews*, obſerves, that the greateſt part did not believe in Chriſt, and others durſt not own that they took him for the Meſſiah, becauſe they were afraid of the Phariſees, and becauſe they loved the praiſe of men more than that of God. Thus it is when the goſpel is preached to men; ſome harden themſelves, and reject it; and others, who are in ſome manner affected with its excellency, dare not make an open profeſſion of truth and holineſs, being withholden by fear, by an unſeaſonable ſhame, or by other paſſions. IV. We ought carefully to attend to what Chriſt ſaid to the Jews towards the end of his life, when they were going to be deprived of his preſence; namely, that he was come to enlighten them, and to lead them to life; that they ſhould have walked in the light, before the darkneſs overtook them; and, that thoſe who would not hear his word, ſhould be judged by that ſame word which they rejected. This declaration is made to all who have the goſpel made known to them; and warns us to make a better uſe than the Jews did of this divine light, which enlightens us, leſt the darkneſs overtake us too; and leſt the goſpel, which is preached to us, become one day the cauſe of our condemnation.

CHAP. XIII.

I. CHRIST waſhes his apoſtles feet, and exhorts them to humility and charity. II. He declares that *Judas* would deliver him to the Jews, and diſcourſes with his diſciples about his deceaſe. III. He exhorts them to love one another. IV. He foretels that *Peter* would deny him.

REFLECTIONS.

WHEN the Son of God waſhed the feet of his apoſtles, a little before his death, the deſign of

of that action, so extraordinary and so surprizing, was to shew how much he loved them, to give them an example of humility, and to teach them, that they ought to love one another, to consider all men as their equals, and to banish from their minds all thoughts of a temporal kingdom and worldly glory. We ought seriously to meditate upon this instance of humility and charity, which is of so great efficacy to render us truly humble, and to excite us to love one another sincerely. If Jesus Christ who is our Master and Lord, has so humbled himself as to wash his disciples feet, which was the business of servants and slaves, there is no office we ought to think too mean, when charity and the good of our neighbour is concerned. This is the use we ought to make of this action, as our Lord exhorts us in these words: *I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you; if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them* II. Our Lord thought fit to declare, in the presence of his apostles, that one of them would deliver him to the Jews, that when *Judas* should betray him, they might be convinced that it was to happen so, for the accomplishment of the designs of providence. Howbeit, Christ did not name *Judas*, nor discover him to all the apostles, because they should not attempt to hinder the execution of his design. From thence it appears plainly, that our Saviour was not ignorant of any thing that was to befal him; that he knew the purposes of men, and the most secret thoughts of their hearts. He foresees the treachery of *Judas*, but is not the author of it; it was the covetousness of that infidel disciple, which hurried him on to so foul a deed; and he proceeds to put in execution what he had resolved, though Jesus had forewarned him that he knew his design. Thus God foresees the sins which men are going to commit, without being the cause of them; he warns them of

their

their ſin and danger, but when they are obſtinate, he leaves them to themſelves. III. It is next to be obſerved, that Chriſt being ſhortly to leave his diſciples, recommended to them, above all things, to love one another, which is the great commandment that our bleſſed redeemer has left, and of which he has given us an example, by dying for us; and has moſt expreſly declared, that this ſhould be the token by which his true diſciples would be diſtinguiſhed. Our principal duty therefore is, heartily to love each other, and to live in peace and concord, without which we have no right to bear the glorious name of Chriſtians. IV. Chriſt's foretelling that *Peter* would deny him, is a freſh proof that nothing is hid from our Lord, and that he knows us better than we know ourſelves. St *Peter* did not think himſelf capable of ſo great unbelief, and yet he fell that very night. Such an example ſhould teach us all to diſtruſt ourſelves, and to be continually upon our guard, humbly acknowledging our weakneſs.

CHAP. XIV.

THIS chapter and the two following contain the diſcourſe that Chriſt had with his diſciples the evening before his death. His deſign in this diſcourſe, was to comfort them, to ſtrengthen their faith, and to fill them with courage and zeal, to the end, they might not be offended at his death; and, that afterwards they might be in a condition to preach the goſpel, without fearing the hatred of the world.

In this fourteenth chapter, I. Chriſt makes mention to the apoſtles of the glory to which he was going to be exalted, and to which he would exalt them one day. II. He tells them, that they ought to be convinced by his miracles that God had ſent him, and that they themſelves ſhould do as great miracles

as his. And, III. He exhorts them to keep his commandments; he promises to send them the holy Ghost, assures them they should see him quickly again, and talks to them of the happiness of those that shall persevere in his love, and observe his word. IV. He gives them his blessing and his peace, and exhorts them to rejoice at his departure. This discourse being finished, he leaves *Jerusalem*, and goes with his apostles towards the mount of *Olives*.

REFLECTIONS.

IN this and the following chapters, we observe in general the great love Christ had for his disciples, and which he bears to all those that love him and believe in him. The duties which this discourse of our Lord engages us to, are, I. To meditate continually upon the glory to which he is exalted in the heavens, and to the enjoyment of which he declares he will likewise receive us; to aspire to the same glory, by following the way that leads to it; and, since he himself is that way that leadeth to life, to adhere inviolably to him. II. The second duty, which is indeed the sum of religion, is, ardently to love our Saviour, and to show the sincerity of our love by keeping his commandments. III. The promise which Christ made of sending his Spirit, after his ascension, did not respect the apostles alone, who by the gift of the holy Ghost were to have a power of working miracles conferred on them, but had some respect to all the faithful, into whose hearts he does send his spirit of comfort and sanctification. It is our duty, therefore, to implore the guidance and assistance of the holy Ghost, remembring what Christ said, that the world cannot know nor receive that holy Spirit; and that therefore, if we desire to obtain it, we must purify our hearts from the love of the world. IV. We should consider, that as our Lord promised his disciples

ciples to return to them after his resurrection, so he will come to us at the last day; that then his elect shall be filled with comfort and joy; and that, in expectation of his glorious coming, our chief care ought to be to persevere in his love, and to obey his divine commandments. The last part of this chapter teaches us, that Christ communicates and unites himself in the most intimate manner to all those that love him and keep his word; that he heaps his favours upon them, and grants them his blessing and his peace. A due reflection upon all these precious advantages, ought to inflame us with love for our gracious redeemer, and convince us that all our happiness consists in being faithful to him, in loving him, and living in communion with him.

CHAP. XV.

OUR Lord does four things in this chapter. I. He represents by the comparison of the vine and the branches, the union between him and his disciples. II. He exhorts them to persevere in this union, and in his love, to keep his commandments, and particularly, to love one another. III. He tells them, he had chosen them to preach the gospel throughout all the earth with wonderful success. IV. He warns them, that they should be exposed to persecution and the hatred of the world; but, for their encouragement, he represents to them, that he had been exposed to the same hatred, and promises them the assistance of the holy Ghost, which he would send after he left them.

Reflections.

THE following reflections may be made upon the four parts of this chapter. I. The first, which contains the similitude of the vine and the branches,

branches; denotes the ſtrictneſs of the union between Chriſt and the faithful, that all our happineſs depends upon this union, that we muſt partake of the ſpirit and life of Chriſt, before we can bring forth fruit to the glory of God, and anſwerable to the advantage of being his diſciples; and that ſuch as are not united to him by faith, and that bear no fruit, ſhall be cut off and caſt into the fire like withered branches. II. The ſecond part teaches us, that our great and principal duty is to continue in the love of Chriſt, to keep his commandments, and to love each other; continually ſetting before us, for this purpoſe, the example of his great love to us, which engaged him to lay down his life for us. III. Chriſt's telling his apoſtles, that he had choſen them to eſtabliſh his kingdom throughout the world, is a very clear proof of the divinity of the goſpel, ſince the preaching of the apoſtles was attended with the converſion of ſo many nations; but we ought likewiſe to conſider, that our Lord has choſen and called us all, that we may bring forth fruit unto holineſs, and that each of us may labour with all his might to promote his kingdom and the knowledge of him. IV. The laſt part of this chapter inſtructs us in two things: The one is, that the world uſually hates thoſe that love Chriſt, and that lead a godly life; but we muſt not think that ſtrange, ſince our Lord himſelf has likewiſe been expoſed to the ſame hatred. The other, that ſince Chriſt has ſpoken, and the goſpel has been preached to men, thoſe who continue in infidelity and in corruption are without excuſe, becauſe they reject the teſtimony of the Son of God, of the holy Spirit, and of the apoſtles, and wilfully ſhut their eyes againſt the truth.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

I. CHRIST continues to warn the apostles, that they ought to prepare themselves to be persecuted, and even to suffer death. II. To alleviate their sorrow at his departure, he promises them the holy Ghost; and tells them, that, that holy Spirit would condemn the unbelieving world, and enable them more perfectly to know the truths which he had taught them, and to declare them to mankind. III. He adds, that he was to leave them for a little time, but that they would soon see him again, when he should rise from the dead; that then they would be filled with joy; that he would bestow on them new favours, and procure for them the most precious gifts. IV. This discourse of Christ served to comfort the apostles, and to strengthen their faith.

Reflections.

LET us learn from this chapter, I. That as the apostles were to be exposed to great persecutions, so likewise true believers must expect to feel the effects of the hatred of those who neither know nor love the Lord Jesus. II. That it was necessary for our happiness that Christ should leave the world, that he might enter into his glory, and send us the holy Ghost, and establish his kingdom. III. What Christ says of the holy Spirit, that *when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment*; signifies, that the coming of the holy Ghost, and the preaching of the apostles, would serve to convict the Jews of their wilful and inexcusable unbelief; to prove that Jesus was the Son of God; and to destroy the kingdom of the devil. This is what actually happened; whereby we plainly see, that the doctrine of our Lord proceeds from God. IV. The excellent

excellent promifes which Chrift made the apoftles, of filling them abundantly with the gifts of the holy Ghoft, have likewife been accomplifhed, and the effects thereof appeared in the wonderful fuccefs of their preaching. V. We may obferve, that the apoftles did not underftand what our Saviour meant, when he told them, that in a little while they fhould not fee him; and again, in a little while they fhould fee him; and that he was going to his father, and that then they fhould be entirely comforted: but thefe words, as well as the foregoing, were perfectly explained by his refurrection, by his afcenfion, and by their glorious confequences. Thefe promifes, which confirmed the faith of the apoftles, ought alfo to ftrengthen ours, and induce us to believe, that although Jefus Chrift be at prefent abfent from us, he will not be fo always; that, if we perfevere in his love, he will procure for us from God the moft valuable favours; and that, as he returned to his apoftles after his refurrection, he will likewife return to us at his fecond and laft coming, to bring us into the glory of his kingdom.

CHAP. XVII.

THIS chapter contains the prayer which Chrift offered to God his father before he fuffered death, which confifts of three articles: I. He prays for himfelf, and defires to be received into heavenly glory, that God may be glorified thereby. II. He prays for the apoftles, whom he was going to leave; and begs of his father to protect them, and to fanctify them, to the end that they may perfevere in the faith, and be enabled to preach the gofpel throughout the world, without fearing perfecutions. III. He prays for all thofe that fhould believe in him, and that fhould receive the preaching of the apoftles; and

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he desires of God, that the apostles, and all the faithful, may be always united to him and to one another, by faith, and by charity; and that they might also be admitted to that glory into which he was to enter, and remain for ever with him.

Reflections.

IN the former part of this excellent prayer, which our Lord made when he was just going to offer himself as a sacrifice upon the cross, there are two things to be considered: First, That the Christian religion consists in knowing the one only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent; that this is the only way to obtain eternal life; and therefore, that faith in God and Christ is absolutely necessary to salvation. We observe further, our Lord's great zeal for the glory of God, and the glorious reward he expected after his sufferings. By this example of our Saviour, we should learn to be animated with the same zeal, and to glorify God upon earth as much as we are able, that we may be admitted into that glory, which he has prepared for his elect before the foundation of the world. II. We see, in this prayer, the great love that Christ bore to his disciples, and with how much warmth and tenderness he recommended them to the protection of God his father before he left them. The event made appear, that the prayers of our Lord were heard, since, except *Judas*, whose infidelity he had foretold, all the apostles persevered in the truth which they had embraced, and the zeal they exerted had so wonderful success in the conversion of men. III. But what we ought above all to observe here, and what chiefly concerns us, is, that our Lord did not only pray for the apostles, but for all such as should believe in him, and that should receive their preaching. Hence we see, how dear the faithful are to Christ, the care he takes

takes of them, and the desire he has to render them partakers of that glory which he now enjoys. This ought to fill all those who truly love the Lord Jesus, with firm confidence and unspeakable joy. But it must be carefully observed, that Christ only prays thus for true believers; and that he himself declared, that he did not pray for the men of this world, for unbelievers. If, therefore, we desire to be of the number of those for whom Christ makes this prayer, and for whom he interceeds in heaven, we must separate ourselves from the world, we must be joined to Christ by a true faith, and to our neighbours by a sincere love, and persevere in the communion of God our Father, and of Jesus Christ our Saviour, to the end of our lives.

CHAP. XVIII.

I. CHRIST is taken in the garden. II. He is afterwards carried before the council of the Jews. III. And next before *Pilate*, who refused at first to condemn him. IV. We find here likewise St *Peter*'s denial.

REFLECTIONS.

IN this chapter there are four principal things to be considered: I. That our Lord caused those that came to apprehend him to fall down to the earth by one word only. St *John* takes notice, that Christ gave this mark of his power, to secure his apostles from being hurt by those who came to seize him; and, to shew them that he could, if he had pleased, escape death. II. The second reflection relates to the behaviour of St *Peter*, who drew his sword in the defence of his master, and a little while after denied him. This action shews that this apostle had zeal, but his zeal was not according to knowledge,

ledge, nor without great mixture of weakneſs. This action furniſhes us with two inſtructions; one is, that if Chriſt blamed what this apoſtle did, upon an occaſion that ſeemed lawful, it being to reſiſt thoſe that would unjuſtly have taken away his maſter's life; all actions of violence and revenge are unlawful, and there is nothing that can authorize them; and, that patience and meekneſs is the character of Chriſt's diſciples. The other is, that thoſe who abound in zeal and good intentions, may greatly fall, when they preſume too much upon themſelves, and do not guard againſt temptations by watching and prayer; which was St *Peter*'s caſe. III. In the manner in which they proceeded againſt our Lord, when he was brought before the council of the Jews, it plainly appears that he was innocent, and that the Jews only ſought for a pretence to condemn him; but, it is to be obſerved, that our Lord ſubmitted to their judgment, though it was unjuſt, and to their outrages, exerting, on that occaſion, wonderful patience and meekneſs. This is a noble leſſon to us of patience and reſignation, and we ought to conform ourſelves to it. IV. It is to be obſerved, in the laſt place, that when Jeſus was ſet before *Pilate*, that governor would not condemn him at firſt; and, that having aſked our Lord, whether he was the king of the Jews, he anſwered, he was ſo, but that his kingdom was not of this world. Theſe circumſtances ſerve to ſhew the innocence of Chriſt; and, the confeſſion he made in the preſence of *Pilate*, teaches us, that we muſt always make a free confeſſion of the truth, though we were ſure thereby to draw upon ourſelves the hatred of the world: imitating the example of our Saviour, who, as St *Paul* takes notice, *before* Pontius Pilate *witneſſed a good confeſſion*, and ſaid, *he came into the world to bear witneſs unto the truth*; though this

this confeffion was to be the caufe both of his condemnation and death.

CHAP. XIX. 1——16.

PILATE caufes our Lord to be fcourged, and makes the foldiers treat him with indignity and contempt, thinking thereby to pacify the priefts and the chief of the Jews. He declares to them, he found him innocent, and endeavours to fave his life; but they infifting upon his being put to death, he confents, at laft, that he fhould be crucified.

REFLECTIONS.

IN the hiftory of the condemnation of Chrift, we are to confider the behaviour of *Pilate*, that of the Jews, and our Lord's behaviour. I. In the behaviour of *Pilate*, we fee the character of an unjuft judge; fince that governor, believing Chrift to be innocent, caufed him to be fcourged and treated with great contempt. He thought by this to content the Jews, and prevail upon them not to infift upon his being crucified. But the Jews, feeing *Pilate*'s irrefolution, and the regard he had for them, preffed him ftill more; and thus *Pilate*, after having already committed one unjuft action, by fcourging our Saviour, engaged himfelf in the guilt of a much more crying one, by condemning him to be put to death. Condefcending to the defires of wicked men, makes them more bold and enterprizing; and, when men have once begun to do wickedly, they always go farther and farther; one fin leads them on to ftill greater, till at laft they proceed to the higheft crimes. All this fhews how dangerous it is to act againft light, and the conviction of our confcience; to fhew a complaifance for the wicked in evil things; and to feek for evafions and expedients when we are to do

our

our duty, and to resist temptation. II. The behaviour of the Jews, who could not be appeased either by the remonstrances of *Pilate*, or by what Christ had suffered, and who continued to require that he should be crucified, shews, that when men abandon themselves to their passions, and when they have once taken their resolution, be it never so bad, they will give ear to nothing, but engage themselves deeper and deeper in it, till at last they compass their designs. III. The behaviour of Christ, the great patience, moderation, and meekness with which he submitted to all the cruel and unrighteous treatment of *Pilate* and the Jews, ought to make a deep impression upon us. This is a token of his great love, and an example of great weight, to make us patient, meek, moderate, and submissive to the will of God, under all the evils that may befal us, even though we should suffer through the malice and wickedness of men.

CHAP. XIX. 17—42.

ST *John* gives us here an account of the crucifixion, death, and burial of our Lord.

REFLECTIONS.

THE history of the passion and death of our Saviour, is to be considered principally in these three views: I. As a sacrifice which he offered to God for the expiation of our sins, to deliver us from death, and procure us a title to everlasting life. II. As an engagement to love this gracious redeemer, who has so loved us; and to renounce sin, which he came to destroy by his death. III. As an example of patience and humiliation, which we ought continually to set before our eyes. Besides these general considerations, we may make the four following particular

lar reflections upon the circumstances of this history. I. That the writing which was put upon the cross in three languages, made known to all the world the cause of Christ's condemnation, and, consequently, his innocence. II. That the several circumstances of his passion, and of his death, such as the dividing his garments, his thirsting, his bones not being broken, and the piercing his side, had been foretold in the prophecies of the Old Testament. For which reason, the Jews ought to have observed, by all that then happened, that Jesus was the Messiah promised by the prophets; and it is what we ought to be fully persuaded of, by the wonderful agreement between the predictions of the Old Testament, and their accomplishment in the New, in the person of our Saviour. III. What Christ said upon the cross, to recommend the blessed virgin to St *John*, shews the tender care our Lord took of his mother, and, at the same time, his love to that apostle. IV. In the relation of the burial of our Saviour, the courage and boldness of *Joseph* is very remarkable; who, though he had been just condemned and put to death, was not afraid to express his respect for him; the same is very remarkable in *Nicodemus*, who had before been so timorous. The circumstances of his burial, serve also to prove the truth of his death and resurrection. Lastly, When we reflect upon the burial of our Lord, it should teach us not to fear either the grave or death, knowing, that if we die as he did, we shall also rise as he did.

CHAP. XX.

I. CHRIST being risen from the dead, appears first to *Mary Magdalen*. II. Next, to the apostles in the absence of *Thomas*. III. And, after that, to *Thomas* himself.

Reflections.

WE see in this chapter, how Christ shewed himself after his resurrection, first, to *Mary Magdalen*, and then to all the apostles. *Mary Magdalen* was first informed of our Lord's resurrection by an apparition of angels, and she was the first who had the happiness of seeing him after he was risen. This was a reward for her piety and love to Christ; and thus does God make himself known to those who love him, and sincerely seek him. It appears from the account of St *John*, that the apostles did not, at first, believe the resurrection of our Lord, and, that they were not fully convinced, till he had given them certain and repeated proofs of it. This we see particularly in the example of St *Thomas*, who would not believe that Christ was risen, until he had both seen him, and touched his hands, his feet, and his side; but, after he had thus satisfied himself of the truth, which at first he refused to believe, he worshipped him as his Saviour and his God. Our Lord's appearing at several different times, serves to prove, that he is really risen from the dead, and to confirm the testimony which the apostles bore to this truth. Christ being thus raised, we can no longer doubt that he was the Son of God, and that he has made a perfect atonement for our sins by his death. His resurrection is an image, and an undoubted pledge of our own, and therefore ought mightily to strengthen our faith and hope, and fill us with exceeding joy. Let faith in Christ risen purify and sanctify our hearts; and let us, after the example of *Mary* and the apostles, who were so exceedingly rejoiced to see their Master risen, and who shewed so much zeal and love for him, worship him as our Lord and our God. So that, expressing the sincerity of our faith by our obedience, we may attain that happiness

happiness which he has promised to all those who truly believe in him.

CHAP. XXI.

I. JESUS appears to the apostles near the sea of *Tiberias*, and gives them proofs of his resurrection. II. He confirms St *Peter* in his apostleship, and foretels what was to happen to that apostle, and to St *John*; which finishes this gospel.

REFLECTIONS.

I. WE see in this chapter, first, that our Lord was pleased to assure his apostles of his resurrection, not only by shewing himself to them, and by eating in their presence, but by giving them marks of his divine power. This ought to convince us more and more of that great truth upon which all our comfort depends. II. Jesus Christ, before he reinstated St *Peter* in his apostleship, asked him three times, whether he loved him. Our Lord obliged him to make these three declarations, that this apostle might be more sensible of the sin he had committed in denying him three times, and repair the scandal he had thereby given. This teaches us, that Christ pardons none but such as confess their sins, that repair them as well as they are able, and forsake them, and return to their duty. But what he chiefly requires of us, is, to love him with all our heart, so as to be able to say with St *Peter*, *Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee*; otherwise we deserve not to be called his disciples. III. It may be further observed, that, when St *Peter* had made this declaration, Christ re-established him in his apostleship, saying to him, *Feed my sheep*. He even foretold that he should undergo martyrdom, which shewed, that the fidelity of this apostle should

thenceforwards be proof against all temptations. Thus God pardons all those that truly repent; and thus he grants them new supplies of grace: wherefore, those whom God has thus pardoned, ought zealously and inviolably to adhere to his service all the rest of their lives. We see, lastly, that our Lord foretels, that St *John* should *tarry* till he came. This signified, that this apostle should live till he had seen the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the ruin of the Jews. It was a privilege Christ thought fit to grant to this disciple, whom he loved: And this promise was fulfilled, St *John* having lived to a great age, and long after all the other apostles, and about thirty years after the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and seen, before his death, the completion of all that he had heard his Lord foretel concerning this destruction, and the establishment of his kingdom.

The End of the Gospel according to St JOHN.

THE

ACTS

OF THE

APOSTLES.

ARGUMENT.

St Luke *relates, in this book, how the Christian religion prevailed, and was established, after the ascension of our Saviour; first at* Jerusalem, *and afterwards in several other places, by the preaching of the Apostles, and chiefly by the ministry of St* Peter *and St* Paul. *This history contains that period of time which passed between the ascension of Christ, and the first imprisonment of St* Paul *at* Rome, *making the space of about twenty eight years.*

CHAP. I.

IN the first chapter St *Luke* relates two things: I. The ascension of our Lord. II. The choice of St *Matthias* to the office of an apostle.

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

THE first part of this chapter teaches us, that our Lord being risen, continued forty days upon earth, that he might the more fully convince the apostles of the truth of his resurrection; and, to give them necessary instructions. At the end of these forty days, he was carried up into heaven in their presence, because they were to be witnesses of this great event; and angels appeared to them, assuring them, that Jesus was ascended into heaven, and that he would come from thence at the last day. This furnishes us with the most convincing proofs of the resurrection of our Lord, of his ascension, and of the certainty of his last coming; these truths being attested by the apostles, by the angels, as well as by the wonderful effects that followed his exaltation to the heavenly glory. His ascension ought to convince us, that he has a sovereign authority over all things, and that his kingdom is spiritual and heavenly. It should likewise engage us continually to raise our thoughts and our desires towards that glorious mansion where our Lord is exalted at the right hand of his Father, and where he also prepares for us an everlasting habitation; and to live in a constant practice of holiness, in expectation of his coming again. In the second part of this chapter, there are two things principally to be observed: One, that religious assemblies are authorised by the example of the apostles, and the first disciples of Christ; who, after his ascension to heaven, did commonly meet together to pray. The other is, that as our Lord had chosen twelve apostles, the first care of St *Peter* and his collegues was, to appoint an apostle in the place of *Judas*; that, for this purpose, they made choice of two persons, who had been witnesses of the life and resurrection of our Saviour; but that they cast

cast lots, and prayed the Lord to shew which of the two he had chosen, because the apostles were to be chosen immediately by Christ himself.

CHAP. II.

St *Luke* relates four things in this chapter. I. How the apostles received the holy Ghost upon the day of pentecost. II. St *Peter*'s discourse to the Jews on that day. III. The effect of this discourse, which was the conversion of three thousand persons. IV. The condition the church of *Jerusalem* was in at that time.

Reflections.

On this chapter we must observe, I. That Christ, by the descent of the holy Ghost on the apostles, fulfilled the promises he had made them of sending a comforter to them after his departure, and gave them plain and undoubted proofs of his exaltation to heaven. He bestowed on them the gift of speaking all kinds of languages, to shew they were to preach the gospel to all the nations of the earth, and to put them into a capacity of doing it. This miracle happened on a solemn day, and in the presence of a great multitude of people, who were come to *Jerusalem* from several parts of the world, that the fame thereof might spread on all sides, and dispose men to receive the preaching of the apostles. II. The end and design of the discourse which St *Peter* made that day, was to teach the Jews, that what happened then was foretold by the prophet *Joel*: that that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was risen again: that God had exalted him to heaven: that it was he who had given his apostles the gift of tongues; and, that all mankind ought to look upon him as the Messiah, and as their Lord and King.

This is also the sum of the gospel, and what we ought to believe concerning Jesus Christ. III. The conversion of those three thousand Jews, who were baptised on that day, was a surprising proof of the efficacy of St *Peter*'s preaching; and their example shews, that a hearty sorrow for sin, and an humble, teachable disposition, prepare the sinner to obey the divine will, and is the character of true penitents, the sure way to amend their lives, and put them into the way of salvation. Lastly, What St *Luke* tells us in this chapter, of the piety of those first Christians, of their constant attendance upon prayer and the holy eucharist, and other religious exercises; of the admirable union there was among them; of their charity; and, in general, of the innocency of their lives and manners, deserves our most serious attention. In all those respects, those first Christians, which composed the church at *Jerusalem*, are a pattern to all churches, and to Christians of all times, to be zealous and constant in prayer, and all the parts of divine service, to live in peace and concord, to practise works of charity, and to become acceptable to God and man, by purity of manners, and by holiness of life.

CHAP. III.

THIS chapter contains, I. The account of a miracle done by St *Peter* in healing a cripple. And, II. What this apostle said to the Jews, to convince them that the said miracle was wrought in the name of Jesus Christ.

REFLECTIONS

I. THE curing this lame man shews us, that presently after the ascension of our Lord, the apostles proved before all the Jews, by illustrious miracles,

miracles, that Christ was ascended to heaven, and that he had given them power to work miracles like those which he himself wrought. By this means the gospel continued to make great progress in *Jerusalem*, all the people being astonished at this miraculous cure. II. We observe in the discourse of St *Peter*, the zeal and boldness with which that apostle reproached the Jews for the crime they had committed in crucifying the Lord; and, how he loudly declared, that this Jesus was the Messiah, whose coming all the prophets had foretold. Thus we ought always to confess the name of our Lord and Saviour, and bear an authentic testimony to the truth. III. We see here, moreover, that though the Jews had crucified the Son of God, St *Peter* exhorts them to repentance, and promises them, that their sins should be blotted out, provided they would be converted, and not obstinately persist in their unbelief. Whence we may infer, that the grace of God is freely offered to all those who repent and amend, how wicked soever they have been. IV. and lastly, St *Peter* informs us, that Christ is that great prophet of whom *Moses* spake, and of whom God said, that we ought to hear whatever he shall say; and that those who refuse to hear him, shall be cut off from his people. This is what St *Peter* takes notice of in the last verse of this chapter, saying, God has sent his Son Jesus to bless us, by turning every one of us from our iniquities. The Son of God, then, was sent to turn men from their iniquities; and, therefore, without this we can have no share in the blessings procured for us by our great Redeemer.

CHAP. IV.

ST *Luke* relates, I. The imprisonment of the apostles St *Peter* and St *John*. II. Their appearing before the council of the Jews, and what happened

pened there. III. A prayer which they made to God, after they were strictly charged to speak no more in the name of Christ Jesus. IV. The state of the church of *Jerusalem*; and above all, the wonderful love and charity that reigned there.

REFLECTIONS.

IN this chapter we see, I. The accomplishment of what our Saviour had told the apostles, namely, that they should be cast into prison, and brought before magistrates for his sake; but, it is likewise to be observed, that the severe treatment they met with did not shake their constancy; and that the number of Christians increased daily, notwithstanding the opposition of the Jews. II. St *Luke* informs us, that the apostles appearing before the council, spake there with a holy boldness, and with such evidence, that their enemies were amazed at it, and had nothing to charge them with. This was an effect of that divine power with which the apostles were endowed, and of the promises Christ had made them to assist them, and give them such wisdom as could not be resisted. III. The zeal which the apostles shewed upon the magistrates forbidding them to preach any longer the gospel, and their answer, that it was not fit to obey man rather than God, is an example, which shews that nothing should hinder us from obeying God; and, in particular, that the ministers of the gospel, who, through fear of men, or any worldly motive, are afraid to say or do what God commands, are cowards and prevaricators. IV. The fervent prayer which the apostles offered up to God, to implore his assistance, shews the courage and confidence with which they were animated. And the tokens God gave them of his presence and favour, by shaking the place where they were assembled, was a confirmation

mation to them that God heard and accepted their prayer, and that he would always protect them. Those who fear God and seek his glory, are sure to find a powerful assistance and relief in prayer. God never fails to hear those who thus call upon him; and, when we defend his cause, we ought not to fear the vain efforts of men. V. What is said at the end of this chapter, about the union and agreement among the believers at *Jerusalem*, and of the use they made of their goods, shews, that the spirit of Christianity is a spirit of peace and concord, that true Christians have but one heart and one soul, and that they willingly and freely exercise charity towards the necessitous.

CHAP. V.

I. ST *Luke* gives an account of the sin of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, and the punishment God inflicted on them. II. He makes mention next of the miracles of the apostles, and the wonderful progress of the gospel at *Jerusalem*. III. The apostles are imprisoned a second time, but God delivers them by an angel, and they continue to preach the gospel. IV. They are brought again before the council, which condemns them to be whipped, and forbids them to preach any longer the doctrine of Christ.

REFLECTIONS.

THERE are three reflections to be made upon the history of *Ananias*. I. God struck that man and his wife dead for having lied to St *Peter*, that their example might keep in awe all the members of the church, and support the authority of the apostles in the beginning of the preaching of the gospel; and to shew the divinity of the doctrine they preached. II. This event teaches us, that God knows mens

mens hearts, and the most hidden things; and, that though men may be deceived, yet he cannot; and, that those who lie to men, and particularly to their spiritual guides, do lie to God, and expose themselves to his vengeance. III. It appears from hence, that it is a great sin to make use of falshood and deceit in the exercise of charity; that it is in our own power to give, or withhold our hand; but, when once we have devoted a thing to God and to religious uses, we are not allowed to take it back, nor even to retain the smallest part of it. IV. We must particularly observe what is said in this chapter concerning the surprising miracles wrought by the apostles, and the prodigious increase of the church at *Jerusalem*, as also the love and reverence that every one had for the Christians: these are authentic proofs of the divinity of the christian doctrine, and its efficacy. And since this progress of the gospel was the fruit, not only of the miracles of the apostles, but likewise of the union that reigned among the faithful, and of the innocency of their manners, we may learn from thence, how effectual the good lives of Christians are, to render the religion of Christ venerable, and to establish it in the world. The apostles were a second time imprisoned, but God in a miraculous manner caused the gates of the prison to be opened by an angel. This was a fresh proof of the divine protection, which must needs have filled them with joy and confidence, and ought to have convinced their enemies, that it was in vain to oppose the preaching of the gospel. We see that the apostles, coming out of the prison, went immediately to teach in the temple, notwithstanding the charge they had received; and, that being summoned for it before the council, they spoke there with great wisdom and boldness, declaring, that they were obliged to obey God rather than men. This instance of courage and zeal in the apostles, is a lesson to us always to follow

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the dictates of our conscience, without being afraid of the threatnings of men; and that neither the orders nor interdicts of magistrates should ever hinder us from obeying God, and doing what he commands us. Observe further, That the council being enraged against the apostles, would have put them to death, but God made use of the prudent advice of *Gamaliel*, to deliver them from the danger that threatned them. The manner in which this wise senator addressed the council, shews, that pious and moderate advice ought to be followed; that we ought never to do any thing through passion and rash zeal, especially in matters of religion; that the designs of which God is not the author, are sooner or later defeated of themselves; but that those which proceed from him are infallibly fulfilled, in spite of the opposition of men; and that those who withstand them fight against God. The last reflection is, that as the apostles, having been condemned to be whipped, rejoiced that they had the honour to suffer such a disgrace for the sake of Christ, and continued to preach the gospel; thus ought we constantly, and with joy, to bear the evils which our duty may expose us to, and persevere in it.

CHAP. VI.

THIS chapter contains two parts. I. In the first we read of the appointment of the order of deacons, whose office it was to distribute the alms of the church. And, in the second, the accusation against St *Stephen* before the council of the Jews.

REFLECTIONS.

I. WE have here an account of the institution of deacons, who were appointed by the apostles to distribute the alms of the faithful. Though this office

office be at this time abolished in most Christian churches, through the fault of men, and the disorder that has crept into it in several respects, it is nevertheless a divine institution, and very useful for the edification of the church. II. Since God thought fit that the distribution of alms should be committed to prudent persons, and such as were filled with the holy Ghost; it appears that charity is a most important duty, that the alms of the faithful ought to be distributed with great prudence and wisdom, and that it should be done by men of integrity, and that fear God, and that they should be appointed by the church; and, in general, none should be put into ecclesiastical offices, but persons that have a good testimony, and that are of known piety and probity. III. St *Stephen*, one of the seven deacons, a man remarkable for his faith and zeal, and the miracles he wrought, was not long before he felt the hatred of the Jews. He was accused of being an enemy to God and the law of *Moses*, and brought before the council to be condemned; but he appeared before them with a holy boldness, and in such a manner as surprised his very judges. Good men have in all ages been exposed to the hatred and calumnies of the wicked; but their injustice and violence towards them, does not hinder them from discharging their duty with courage, nor from fulfilling the obligations of their calling, and of their conscience.

CHAP. VII.

THIS chapter contains, I. The discourse St *Stephen* made before the council of the Jews; And, II. The relation of his martyrdom and death.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THE design of St *Stephen*'s discourse before the council, was to prove, that he was neither an enemy to God nor the law, as he was accused to be; but that he worshipped the God of *Abraham*, and of the patriarchs. II. That Christ was the Messiah that was to be born of the posterity of *Abraham*, and whose coming *Moses* and the prophets had foretold. III. That the covenant of God, and his service, were not confined to the nation of the Jews, nor to the temple of *Jerusalem*, nor to the ceremonial worship which *Moses* had prescribed. IV. That the Jews had at all times been rebellious against God; that they had rejected and persecuted the prophets; and that therefore it was not strange that they should reject Christ, and persecute his servants. We observe in this discourse of St. *Stephen*, his great zeal, and the holy liberty which he took in reproaching the Jews for the hardness of their hearts, though he knew very well, in speaking thus, he exposed himself to their rage, and to the danger of losing his life. The Jews were so enraged, that they condemned him to be stoned; but God, for his encouragement, having caused him to see heaven open, and Jesus Christ sitting on his right hand, he endured with constancy that cruel death, calling upon the Lord with his last breath, and praying for those who put him to death. This death of the first martyr of the church, should teach us to undergo with courage all the evils which the profession of the truth may bring upon us, and even death itself, if we be called to it; to pardon those that do us the greatest harm, and to pray for them. This example is a further proof how sweet the death of true believers is, and with what comfort it is attended; which should greatly encourage us to godliness, that at our last hour we may likewise commit

our

our souls into the hands of the Lord Jesus, and sleep in peace, in expectation of the blessed resurrection.

CHAP. VIII.

ST *Luke* relates here, I. The persecution that was raised against the church of *Jerusalem* after the death of St *Stephen*. And, II. How St *Philip* preached the gospel at *Samaria*. III. The history of the conversion of a stranger, a great man, who was treasurer of *Candace* queen of *Ethiopia*.

REFLECTIONS.

I. WE find that the death of St *Stephen*, and the persecution that was raised against the church of *Jerusalem*, turned to the advancement of the gospel, since the believers, who were thereupon dispersed, preached the word of God in several places. Thus the persecutions which the first enemies of the church raised against it, contributed towards its increase, and to the spreading the religion of Christ more and more. II. What is said of the credit which the people of *Samaria* gave to *Simon* the magician, shews, that they who know not the truth, are easily seduced by impostors; but the change that happened in that city, after St *Philip* had preached the gospel there, shews, that truth will triumph over error and falshood. St *Luke* observes, that *Simon* himself desired to be baptised, being surprised at the miracles wrought by St *Philip*; which proves, that the wicked are sometimes affected with the excellency of the gospel, so far as even to embrace the profession of it; but not acting upon good principles, their conversion is not sincere. It is added, that *Simon* offered money to St *Peter*, to obtain the power of communicating the holy Ghost, and of working miracles;

miracles; and, that St *Peter* being filled with indignation, denounced the judgment of God against him; upon which we must observe, that it is a detestable impiety to make religion subservient to covetousness and ambition, and to pretend to buy or sell holy things, after what manner soever. Nevertheless, St *Peter* exhorted *Simon* to repent, and even that wicked man, frighted with that heavy denunciation, intreated the apostles to interceed for him. This teaches us, that we ought never wholly to abandon the greatest sinners, nor refuse them the assistance of our exhortations and prayers. III. God at that time called an officer of queen *Candace* to the Christian faith, to shew that the gospel would be soon preached to all nations; and, by means of this man, to spread the true religion throughout *Ethiopia*. This great man, who was one of the Gentile proselytes, who renounced idolatry, was come to worship God at *Jerusalem*, and was employed in reading the scriptures, when God sent *Philip* to instruct him. We may learn from hence, that providence takes a particular care of those who have good intentions; and that God grants greater measure of his grace to those that make a right use of what they have already received, and seek the truth in sincerity. The desire which the eunuch expressed, to understand a passage of *Isaiah* that he was reading, and the docility with which he hearkened to *Philip*, shews, that every one must labour to be instructed in the truths of salvation, as well by himself as by the assistance of others; and, that we ought not to neglect the instructions of such ministers as God has appointed. The eunuch, afrer having heard *Philip*, desired to be baptized; and, after he had made an open profession of his faith, was baptized. Those who love truth, as soon as it is made known to them, ought to embrace the profession of it, and never delay the discharge of their

duty. Lastly, As this eunuch, after he was baptized, returned with joy unto his own country, we ought also highly to esteem the happiness we enjoy in being called to faith in Christ; and the advantage of being made members of his church, should be all our comfort, and all our joy.

CHAP. IX. 1—22.

THIS is the history of the conversion of St *Paul*.

REFLECTIONS.

WE ought most carefully to attend to this history, and consider, I. That St *Paul*, who was so excellent an apostle, was, before his conversion, while he was still a Jew, a declared enemy of the Christian religion, and a severe persecuter of the Christians. This apostle tells us himself, that God called him in that condition, that he might make him an illustrious example of his mercy towards sinners. Nevertheless, it must be remembered, that if *Saul* persecuted the church, it was through ignorance and a false zeal, whilst he even thought that he did what was pleasing to God; as for the rest of his life, it was unblameable. When men sin not through malice and obstinacy, but through ignorance and the force of prejudice, they are more susceptible of God's mercy, and more easily recovered from that state. II. The means which the Lord made use of for *Saul*'s conversion, are very remarkable. When he was going to *Damascus* to persecute the Christians, Christ stopped him near that city, by an apparition that filled him with terror; he spoke to him from heaven, and struck him with blindness. Our Lord proceeded in this manner, because the disposition and temper of *Saul* was such as made it necessary to use

very

very violent methods to cure him of his prejudices, and to render him tractable. Thus God, in his goodneſs and wiſdom; makes uſe of the moſt proper means to bring back ſinners from their errors. III. Theſe words, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* ſhew, that Chriſt looks upon that which is done againſt his members, and againſt his church, as done againſt himſelf; and *Saul's* anſwer, *Lord, what wouldeſt thou have me to do?* expreſſes the humility and docility of ſinners who are truly ſenſible of their ſins. When God calls them they obey, and give up themſelves intirely to him, and follow his commands. IV. It muſt be conſidered, that as ſoon as God had prepared *Saul* to hearken to him, and to receive what ſhould be told him, he ſent him to *Ananias* to be informed by him what he was to do, and that in the mean time, he prepared *Ananias*, by a viſion, to go and viſit *Saul* and inſtruct him; thus God diſpoſed matters with great wiſdom to finiſh the work of *Saul's* converſion. V. Laſtly, *Saul*, after faſting and praying three days, recovered his ſight, and was inſtructed and baptized by *Ananias*; and preſently after began to preach the goſpel in the ſynagogues of the Jews. We ought to admire the power and goodneſs of God in this event, ſo happy for St *Paul*, and ſo beneficial to the whole church; and, this great and ſudden change which was wrought in this apoſtle, ſhews, that ſuch as are ſincerely converted, do intirely alter their opinion and behaviour, giving open and certain proofs of the ſincerity of their converſion.

CHAP. IX. 23—43.

I. ST *Paul*, after his converſion, being perſecuted by the Jews at *Damaſcus*, went to *Jeruſalem*, from whence he was driven by a freſh perſecution,

and forced to fly to *Cesarea*, and from thence to *Tarsus*. II. St *Luke* describes the happy condition of the churches of *Judea*, and of the neighbouring parts. And, III. The miracle of the healing of *Eneas*, and the raising of *Tabitha* from the dead.

REFLECTIONS.

FROM this portion of scripture we may gather, I. That as soon as St *Paul* was converted, and began to preach the gospel, he was persecuted by the Jews. God thought fit, by that means, to try the fidelity of this apostle, and to teach him to suffer for Jesus Christ. Thus it generally happens to those who are resolved to follow Christ, and lead a godly life; they are exposed to the hatred of the world, and to many trials, but none of these things surprise them; they persevere in their duty in spite of opposition, as *Saul*, in spite of the rage of the Jews, continued to preach the gospel, even in the city of *Jerusalem*. II. What St *Luke* says of the happy state of the churches of *Judea*, *Galilee*, and *Samaria*, suggests two reflections; one, that if God permits the church to be persecuted, he likewise gives it some relaxation; the other, that churches are happy and flourishing when they walk in the fear of the Lord, and the gifts of the holy Ghost are multiplied in them. III. The two miracles related at the end of this chapter, prove, that the apostles wrought the same miracles as our Lord had done whilst he was upon earth, which contributed to the conversion of a great number of people. We have particularly, in the history of *Tabitha*, a noble example of piety and works of charity for all Christians, and especially those of her own sex; and the raising to life this holy woman, may be looked on as a reward that God was pleased to grant to her piety and faith, and as a

proof

proof that ſhould confirm us in the belief of the reſurrection, and the hope of a better life.

CHAP. X.

THIS chapter contains an account of the converſion of *Cornelius* the centurion to the Chriſtian religion. This man was a pagan by birth, but worſhipped the true God.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THIS hiſtory is recorded to ſhew us how the goſpel began firſt to be preached to the Gentiles. We ſhould admire the method which providence made uſe of for converting *Cornelius*. God ſent an angel to him, to direct him to ſend for St *Peter*, and prepared that apoſtle to go to *Cornelius*; which he would not have done, if God had not revealed it to him, that he ought to look upon no man as unclean, and that the goſpel was to be declared to the Gentiles as well as Jews. To this alluded the viſion of the veſſel, in which were creatures, that the Jews, by their law, were forbid to eat of. II. Beſides this general conſideration, it may be obſerved, that *Cornelius*, though engaged in the profeſſion of arms, was nevertheleſs a devout and charitable man, and one that feared God; for which reaſon God ſent an angel, to aſſure him his prayers and alms were had in remembrance, and brought him to the knowledge of Chriſt, by the miniſtry of St *Peter*. We may learn from hence, how acceptable to God works of piety and charity are, and that he beſtows greater light, and more grace on thoſe who have an upright heart, and call upon him, and fear him. III. St *Peter*'s diſcourſe to *Cornelius* and his friends, comprehends the ſubſtance of the doctrine which the apoſtles preached,

that God had ſent his Son to bring ſalvation to the Jews, that they had put him to death, but that he was riſen again, and was to be the judge of quick and dead. Theſe are the moſt important truths of religion, which ought to be received by all Chriſtians. They repreſent faith in Chriſt, and holineſs of life, as the only means of ſalvation; which is particularly pointed at in theſe words of St *Peter*: *That God is no reſpecter of perſons, but that in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him.* And, that *Whoſoever believes in Chriſt, ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins through his name.* IV. The attention, the ſubmiſſion, and obedience with which *Cornelius*, and all his houſe, heard St *Peter*, ought to teach us to receive the word of God with the ſame diſpoſitions when it is declared to us. V. While the apoſtle was ſpeaking to *Cornelius*, the holy Ghoſt came upon them that heard the word, and they received the gift of tongues. God, by working the ſame kind of miracle in behalf of the Gentiles, as he had done for the apoſtles on the day of pentecoſt, moſt evidently ſhewed, that he intended to make the Gentiles alſo partakers of his grace; which obliges us to render thanks to God; us, I ſay, who were formerly heathens, foraſmuch as he then vouchſafed to admit the Gentiles into his covenant, and to pour forth his ſpirit and grace upon them, as well as upon the Jews.

CHAP. XI.

THIS conſiſts of two parts: I. In the former we ſee that the Jews of *Jeruſalem*, who had been converted to the Chriſtian religion, being offended that St *Peter* ſhould go to *Cornelius*, that was a Gentile, they were informed by this apoſtle how God had ſhewed him, that he ſhould preach the goſpel

pel to *Cornelius*, and of the ſucceſs of his preaching; at which the Chriſtians of *Jeruſalem* greatly rejoiced. II. In the latter part St *Luke* relates, how the goſpel ſpread itſelf in ſeveral places, and particularly at *Antioch*: he makes mention alſo of a prophet named *Agabus*, who foretold a famine.

REFLECTIONS.

WE ſee, in the former part of this chapter, that the Chriſtians of *Jeruſalem* were offended at firſt, becauſe St *Peter* had been with *Cornelius*; becauſe it was not lawful for the Jews to have any familiar intercourſe with the Gentiles. But when they knew that this apoſtle went to him by the order of God, and that even the holy Ghoſt had been given to *Cornelius*, and thoſe that were with him, they were pacified, and rejoiced that God was pleaſed thus to call the Gentiles to ſalvation. This teaches us, that inſtead of being jealous of the favours that God beſtows upon others, we ought to rejoice, eſpecially when they are called to repentance and everlaſting life. This happy event, which occaſioned ſo much joy to the ſaints at *Jeruſalem*, and made them cry out, "God has then granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life!" ought ever to be matter of joy and thankſgiving to us, ſince it directly reſpects us. Upon the latter part of this chapter there are three things to be obſerved: The firſt is, That the diſperſion of the church of *Jeruſalem*, and the perſecution that was raiſed againſt the Chriſtians, contributed to ſpread the goſpel in ſeveral places, and to eſtabliſh ſeveral churches, particularly the church of *Antioch*, where the diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt were firſt called Chriſtians. The ſecond, That theſe churches were founded and kept up by the miniſtry of *Barnabas*, of *Paul*, and other perſons that laboured for their edification. This ſhews, that the miniſtry of the

servants of God is of great use in the church, provided it be performed by good men, and such as are filled with faith and the holy Ghost, as were those St *Luke* mentions. The third consideration relates to the prediction that *Agabus* made of a famine that was to happen. This prediction proves, that God knows things future, and that nothing comes to pass in this world but by his providential will. And the resolution the Christians took to make a collection for their brethren in *Judea*, is an example that should stir us up to assist those that are in want, and especially those that are our brethren, and the members of Jesus Christ; and even to prevent their wants.

CHAP. XII.

ST *Luke* relates three things in this chapter: I. The martyrdom of St *James*, brother to St *John*. II. The imprisonment of St *Peter*, and his miraculous deliverance. III. The manner of king *Herod*'s death.

REFLECTIONS.

IN this chapter we see, I. How the apostle St *James*, as well as St *Stephen*, sealed the truth of the gospel with his blood; and that the Christian religion was established by the sufferings of those that preached it, which confirms the truth and divinity of it. II. God, who had permitted St *James* to be put to death, did likewise permit St *Peter* to be imprisoned by king *Herod*, but this apostle was miraculously delivered by an angel, who was sent to open the prison doors, and set him at liberty. This wonderful deliverance gives us occasion to own, that though God does sometimes allow the wicked to execute their designs, yet when it pleases him, he restrains them, and sets bounds to their wickedness, and

and that he always watches over his faithful servants. We likewise see, by this event, how powerful prayer is, since the church of *Jerusalem* obtained the deliverance of St *Peter*, by the prayers they put up to God for him. III. The death of *Herod*, who was eaten of worms for a punishment of his pride, is worthy of our attention. This event, which is likewise related by *Josephus*, the Jewish historian, shews, that God confounds the proud; and particularly that the persecutors of the church do commonly make a fatal end; and that cruel and haughty princes, sooner or latter, receive the punishment due to their wickedness.

CHAP. XIII.

ST *Paul* and St *Barnabas* go from *Antioch* to *Cyprus*, and from thence to *Paphos*, where St *Paul* smote a Jewish impostor with blindness, and where he converted to the faith the proconsul *Sergius Paulus*, who was the chief magistrate of that island. II. After this, St *Paul*, coming to *Antioch* in *Pisidia*, preaches to the Jews of that city, shewing that God, according to the promises he had made to their fathers, had sent Jesus Christ into the world; that this Jesus, whom they had crucified, was risen again; and, that all those who should believe in him, would obtain salvation. III. Several persons, as well Jews as Gentiles, believing the preaching of St *Paul*, the Jews were so enraged against him, as to drive him away and *Barnabas*; but the apostles declared to them, that since they rejected the gospel, they would, from that time forwards, preach it to the Gentiles, and so left them.

REFLECTIONS.

WE see, in the beginning of this chapter, that St *Paul* and St *Barnabas*, passing through several places of *Asia* and *Greece*, by order of the holy Ghost, and, after that the ministers of the church of *Antioch* had prayed and fasted, did successfully preach the gospel in those parts. These are tokens of the divinity of their calling; but we have, especially, one remarkable proof in the conversion of the governor of *Paphos*, and in the miraculous punishment of *Elimas*, who would have dissuaded the governor from embracing the Christian religion. We see in these two persons, one of whom believed the preaching of St *Paul*, as the other opposed it with all his might, that if the word of God saves those who receive it, it will condemn those who are not converted by it; and, that those who withstand the truth, and turn away others from faith and piety, do draw upon themselves the severest judgments of God. St *Paul*'s discourse in the synagogue of *Antioch*, is an abstract of the Christian doctrine. This apostle proves to the Jews that Christ was born of the seed of *David*, and that he is the promised Messiah; which he shews by the testimony of *John* the baptist, and by the prediction of the prophets. He then declares, that this Jesus, who was crucified at *Jerusalem*, was raised from the dead, in conformity to the prophecies of the old testament. Lastly, he teaches them, that the design of the coming of Christ, was, to obtain for men the remission of sins; that accordingly, all such as believed in him should be justified; but that those who rejected him, should be excluded from salvation. Since this is the sum of the Christian religion, we ought seriously and continually to attend to it, and to observe, that it is only by faith in Jesus Christ, and by obe-

obedience to the gospel, that we can be saved. As for the effect of St *Paul's* discourse, we see that several believed his preaching; but that most of the Jews continued obstinately in their unbelief; which was the reason why this apostle told them, that he would turn to the Gentiles. This shews what different effects the preaching of the gospel produces; that some grow better by it, others reject it, and, instead of yielding to truth, haughtily oppose it. But if there are unbelievers, who continue in their blindness, which leads them to destruction, they are themselves the only cause of it, since none are excluded from everlasting life, but those who judge themselves unworthy of it.

CHAP. XIV.

I. ST *Paul* and St *Barnabas* preach at *Iconium*. II. From thence they go to *Lystra*, where having healed an impotent man, the inhabitants of that place took them for gods, which gave occasion to St *Paul* to exhort them to renounce idolatry. III. Soon after, this apostle was stoned by the people of the town, whom the Jews had stirred up against him; but God having saved his life, he went to other places, and then returned to *Antioch*.

REFLECTIONS.

WE find here in general, that the apostles exercised their ministry with great zeal, and in the midst of persecutions; and that St *Paul* in particular felt every where the rage of the Jews, since he was in danger of being stoned with *Barnabas* at *Iconium*, and afterwards was actually stoned at *Lystra*, and even left for dead. We likewise find that God preserved the apostles in the dangers to which they were continually exposed; that he wrought great

great miracles by them, and that, if they were displeased with the great opposition they met with from the Jews, they had the comfort of bringing several Gentiles to the faith. II. The zeal St *Paul* shewed when the inhabitants of *Lystra* took him and *Barnabas* for gods, and would have paid them divine honours, is very remarkable. Those who fear God, and have a true zeal, never seek their own glory; their great aim should be to glorify God alone, and to cause others to know and worship him. III. St *Paul's* discourse to the *Lycaonians*, who were idolators, shews, that God did at all times reveal himself to mankind, by the works of nature and providence, and has always given them proofs of his goodness. Upon which we ought to consider, that if the blessings God bestows upon men in a natural state, should engage them to love and serve him, we are much more obliged so to do; we, I say, to whom he has revealed himself by the gospel, and to whom he has given such strong proofs of his love, by sending his son Jesus Christ into the world. Lastly, St *Luke* takes notice, towards the end of this chapter, of the care which the apostles took to go to several places, that they might exhort the faithful, and chiefly settle pastors in every church, which shews the need Christians have of instructions and exhortations; and, particularly, the necessity of pastors and teachers; and that the will of God is, that there should be every where among Christians ministers to teach, to exhort, and to govern the church.

CHAP. XV.

I. A Dispute being raised in the church of *Antioch*, because some Jews, who had been converted to Christianity, insisted that the Gentiles, who embraced the same faith, ought to be circumcised as the

the Jews, and observe the ceremonies of the law of *Moses*; St *Paul* and St *Barnabas* were sent to *Jerusalem*, to consult the apostles upon this question. II. The apostles being met together, declared that the Gentiles were not obliged to observe circumcision and the legal ceremonies, but that it would be sufficient for them to believe in Christ Jesus, and to obey the gospel, and to abstain from those things which might occasion them to fall into idolatry. And this is what the the apostles communicated to the church of *Antioch*, in a letter which they sent by St *Paul* and St *Barnabas*. III. After which, those two apostles departed from thence to other places, to preach the gospel.

REFLECTIONS.

WE have here a very plain explication of the doctrine of justification; and what is here said serves to clear other places of the new testament, which treat of this doctrine; on which account this chapter deserves a particular attention: It must be observed here, that the question proposed was not to know whether the Gentiles, in order to salvation, were obliged to keep the commandments of Christ, and to do good works; no one then doubted of this truth, nor was there any dispute about it. But the question was, whether they were obliged to submit to circumcision and the rest of the ceremonies of the law of *Moses*, as certain Jews converted to Christianity pretended? It must be next remembered, that the apostles determined two things upon this question: The first, that the converted Gentiles ought not to be obliged to circumcision, and the practice of the Jewish ceremonies; but, that it was sufficient to salvation, that they should sincerely believe in Christ. This the apostles proved, 1. Because God had poured his spirit upon the Gentiles as well as Jews, and had given them faith; And, 2. From the very na-

ture of the *Mosaical* ceremonies, as well as by the predictions of the prophets. This is also the doctrine which St *Paul* lays down in his epistles, where he teaches, that *we are justified by faith alone in Jesus Christ, without the works of the law.* The second thing which the apostles declared, was, that the Gentiles "should abstain, however, from what had been sacrificed to idols, from things strangled, and from blood, and from fornication." The reason of this prohibition was, because the use of these things, as well as fornication, were part of the idolatrous worship of the Gentiles; and that therefore, if Christians did not abstain from these things, it might have drawn them into idolatry, and confirmed the Gentiles in their false religion. It appears from hence, that the apostles have not excused men from the observation of the moral law, but that they have only dispensed with the ceremonial law. And that, on the contrary, in teaching that we are justified by faith, they establish the necessity of good works, since faith cannot be sincere if it does not produce good works, and obedience to the gospel. By the separation of St *Barnabas* from St *Paul*, mentioned at the end of this chapter, we find that these two excellent servants of God were of different opinions in some things; but this difference did not disunite them, nor hinder them from labouring incessantly in advancing the kingdom of Christ.

CHAP. XVI.

ST *Paul* calls *Timothy* to the ministry; and, after having been in divers places, he arrives at *Philippi*, a city of *Macedonia*, where he preaches the gospel, and where a woman named *Lydia* was converted to the Christian faith. While St *Paul* was at *Philippi*, a tumult was raised against him, because he had delivered a maid servant that was possessed with

with an evil ſpirit. He and *Silas* were both ſcourged and caſt into priſon, but being wonderfully delivered by God, the jailor was converted to Chriſtianity, and the magiſtrates of *Philippi* intreated the apoſtles to depart, excuſing themſelves for their ill treatment of them.

REFLECTIONS.

THERE are two things to be obſerved in the calling *Timothy* to the holy miniſtry. The firſt is, that *Timothy*, who was ſo excellent a ſervant of God, had been educated in piety; and that though he was young, every body gave him a good character; by which we ſee that none ſhould be admitted to the miniſtry, but perſons that fear God from their youth, and have the teſtimony of a holy life. The ſecond, that St *Paul*, who condemned circumciſion, when impoſed on the Gentiles as a neceſſary duty, did, notwithſtanding, circumciſe *Timothy*, leſt the Jews ſhould reject his miniſtry, under pretence that his father was a Gentile. This is an example of prudence, condeſcenſion, and charity, by which we are taught, that in indifferent matters we muſt ſubmit as much as poſſible to the weak, avoid every thing that may give offence, and regard what may moſt contribute to the peace and edification of the church. II. St *Luke* ſays, that the ſpirit did not ſuffer St *Paul* to go to *Aſia*, and that he was warned by a viſion to preach the goſpel in *Macedonia*; upon which we are to obſerve, that it was God who guided the apoſtles to the places where they could do moſt good, and where their preſence was moſt neceſſary. God does not always think fit that the goſpel ſhould be preached in all places, but reveals it to ſome rather than to others, for wiſe, for juſt and good reaſons. III. St *Luke* tells us, that there was a woman called *Lydia*, who heard St *Paul*, and that God opened her heart to at-

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tend unto the things that were ſpoken by the apoſtles. This ſhews us, that faith is produced by hearing the word of God, and by the efficacy of his grace, which opens the heart, and diſpoſes it for the reception of the truth. IV. St *Paul* having delivered a maid ſervant that was poſſeſſed with an evil ſpirit, her maſters, inſtead of being affected with the miracle, perceiving they had loſt the profit ſhe brought them by divination, ſtirred up the magiſtrates againſt the apoſtle. This ſhews how great power there is in ſelf-intereſt, to excite the paſſions of men, and to hinder them from knowing and receiving the truth. St *Paul* and *Silas*, being ſcourged and impriſoned by order of the magiſtrates of *Philippi*, ſhewed a wonderful conſtancy in the pains and indignities they endured, ſinging praiſes to God in the priſon. Thus Chriſtians receive, not only with patience, but likewiſe with joy, the evils they are expoſed to for the ſake of Chriſt. God opened the doors of the priſon by an earthquake, and the apoſtles had the happineſs of converting the jailor. This is a remarkable inſtance of God's protecting his faithful ſervants; and ſhews, that all that was done againſt the apoſtles turned to the glory of God, to the propagation of the goſpel, and their greateſt comfort. Laſtly, Obſerve, that St *Paul* pleaded that he was a citizen of *Rome*, to oblige the magiſtrates of *Philippi* to own their fault in cauſing him and *Silas* to be ſcourged and impriſoned, without any form of juſtice. This he did to ſhew his innocency, and for the honour of the goſpel which he preached. It appears plain enough, that St *Paul* did not, however, ſay this for fear of ſufferings, ſince if he had declared at firſt that he was a citizen of *Rome*, he might have avoided both the ſcourging and impriſonment. Thus we ſee, that he joined great prudence to an admirable patience, and a profound humility.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

I. ST *Paul* and *Silas* preached the gospel with success at *Thessalonica*; but the Jews having stirred up the magistrates and people of that city against them, they go to *Berea*, and there convert several persons. II. But being persecuted there also by the Jews, St *Paul* leaves that town and goes to *Athens*, a famous city of *Greece*. He there preaches the gospel, and converts several persons.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THE arrival of St *Paul* and *Silas* at *Thessalonica*, and at *Berea*, their preaching in those two cities, and the tumult which the Jews raised against them, shews that St *Paul* fainted not; that the Jews were the most bitter enemies of the gospel, persecuting it in every place; but that they had likewise the comfort of gaining every where souls to Christ. II. What is said in praise of the faithful at *Berea*, who chearfully received the word of God, and examined the scriptures, to see whether what St *Paul* preached to them was agreeable thereto; teaches us to receive the truth with docility and readiness, and at the same time with knowledge and discernment; and that every Christian has a right to examine by the word of God, the doctrine that is preached to him, that he may receive nothing that is not conformable to that divine word; which is the only rule of our faith, and submit obediently to every thing agreeable to it. III. We observe in this chapter, the great zeal of St *Paul*. Grieved to see the city of *Athens* overrun with idolatry, he resolved to preach the gospel there; and being intreated by some philosophers to inform them of the doctrine he taught, did not scruple to discourse to

them concerning the true religion. In imitation of this apostle, we ought to be sincerely concerned when we see men engaged in sin and error, and to lay hold of all occasions that offer to deliver them from it. We observe in the discourse St *Paul* made to the *Athenians*, on one hand, the wisdom and prudence of this apostle, who took occasion, even from their superstitions, to speak to them of the true God; and on the other, the evidence and force with which he proved, by the clearest and strongest arguments, and by the testimony of their own poets, that there is but one God, almighty and all-gracious, who has created all things; and that it is an extreme folly, and the greatest of errors, to worship idols of gold, silver, or stone, as did the Gentiles. The discourse of St *Paul* contains the principal truths of religion: that there is but one only God, creator and preserver of the world: that this God is not far from every one of us; that he does not stand in need of our service, or any thing else from us, since it is he that gives us all life, motion, and being. But above all, we ought to attend to these words, which are the abstract of the doctrine and duties of the gospel, that *God now commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained.* These truths, which St *Paul* once taught in an idolatrous city, are the truths which we profess to believe; but can be of no service to us, any farther than they stir us up to serve God, to fear him, to love him, and to obey the gospel. We see lastly, that this discourse of St *Paul* was attended with the conversion of some persons, but that the greatest part of those who heard him continued in unbelief. Thus the preaching of the word of God

God converts some, whilst others scoff at and reject it.

CHAP. XVIII.

I. ST *Paul* dwells at *Corinth* a year and a half, where he converts a great number of people, and is accused by the Jews before the magistrates. II. From thence he goes to *Ephesus*, to *Jerusalem*, to *Antioch*, and other places, to visit the churches, and to confirm them in the faith. III. There is mention made at the end of this chapter of *Apollos*, who was a minister of the gospel, famous for his zeal, and his great talents.

REFLECTIONS.

I. IN what St *Luke* relates of the stay St *Paul* made at *Corinth*, we may observe the zeal wherewith this apostle laboured every where for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ; his disinterestedness and prudence, which appear in his choosing rather to work with his own hands for his subsistance, than to be maintained at the charge of the church; the troubles he met with from the Jews; and lastly, the divine protection in his afflictions; and the comfort he had in converting a great number of people in that city, and of founding there a very noble church. Thus the Christian religion was more and more established by the preaching of the apostles, and in spite of all opposition of the Jews, and of other enemies of the truth. II. The several journies and voyages of St *Paul*, related in this chapter, shew that he was continually employed in the duties of his calling, and that he laboured with indefatigable application in the edification of the churches. Thus all true and sincere Christians, but particularly the faithful ministers of Christ Jesus,

ſus, exert all their ſtrength, dedicate all their time, yea, their whole lives, to promoting the glory of God, and the ſalvation of men. III. What is here ſaid to the honour of *Apollos*, of his zeal and eloquence, and his other great gifts, and of the extraordinary effects of his miniſtry, ſhould make us acknowledge, that God grants a moſt valuable bleſſing to the church, when he ſends zealous teachers and miniſters, and well ſkilled in the holy ſcriptures, and endowed with the neceſſary talents and gifts for inſtruction and edification; and it ought likewiſe to engage us to beſeech God that he would always raiſe up ſuch men.

CHAP. XIX.

I. ST *Paul* preaches the goſpel in the city of *Epheſus*, and does ſeveral miracles there. II. Certain Jews, attempting to caſt out evil ſpirits in the name of Jeſus, are ill treated by thoſe who were poſſeſſed. III. Several perſons addicted to magick were converted, and gave publick tokens of their repentance. IV. St *Luke* adds an account of the tumult raiſed againſt St *Paul*, by a ſilverſmith, named *Demetrius*, who made great advantage by ſelling little ſilver ſhrines, formed after the model of a famous temple which was in this city, and which was devoted to a goddeſs of the heathens, named *Diana*. That man, finding that St *Paul* by preaching againſt idols made him loſe all his profit, ſtirred up the people againſt him, but the riot was appeaſed by the clerk of the city.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter is a continuation of the wonderful ſucceſs of St *Paul*'s miniſtry. That apoſtle baptized at *Epheſus* certain diſciples, who, till then

then, had only been instructed in the doctrine of *John* the baptist; but as soon as they were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and St *Paul* had laid his hands on them, they received the miraculous gifts of the holy Ghost. Besides these, he converted there a great number of persons, in spite of the opposition of the Jews; he there wrought surprising miracles; and several people that practised the magick art renounced their superstition and their impiety. Thus did this apostle every where advance the kingdom of Christ, and destroy that of the devil. What happened to the Jewish exorcists, who, endeavouring to cast out devils in the name of Jesus, were ill treated by those who were possessed by the evil spirits, tended to convince the Jews, and all the world, that none but the apostles, and such as believed in Christ, were really able to work miracles, and had power over the unclean spirits: the divine efficacy of the name of Jesus, and the excellence of his religion is displayed only by good men; but it does not belong to wicked men, or to hypocrites, to take the name of the Lord in their mouths. St *Luke* informs us, that several people living at *Ephesus*, converted by St *Paul*'s preaching, came and confessed their sins, among whom there were some, who having practised magick and unlawful arts, chose rather publickly to burn their books treating upon those subjects, than to sell them, though they would have brought them in considerable sums. This example is remarkable; it teaches us, that those who are truly penitent, do not scruple to own their faults, to give publick tokens of their repentance, and to renounce all that has been to themselves, or might be to others, an occasion of sin and scandal, though it be never so precious, or dear and profitable to them. What is principally to be observed concerning the sedition which was raised at *Ephesus*

against St *Paul*, is, That it was raised by some crafts-men, who feared that if the people left off worshipping idols, their trade would lose its credit, and their gain be diminished; and to stir up the people, they pretended a regard to religion, and a zeal for the goddess *Diana*. Nothing acts with greater force upon the minds of men than the love of money; nothing raises their passions so much; they cannot bear the truth, when it is contrary to their interest; and when they can do it, they conceal their interest under the mask of religion. This great tumult was at last, with some difficulty, appeased by the town-clerk; and St *Paul* by this means delivered from the danger that threatned him. By which we see that tumults and seditions are very dangerous, and therefore we ought to avoid every thing that tends to promote them; and that wise men are bound to prevent and to calm them by all possible means.

CHAP. XX.

I. ST *Paul* leaves *Ephesus*, and goes to *Troas*, where he preaches the gospel to the Christians of that city, and raises one from the dead. II. From thence he goes to *Miletus*, where having sent for the pastors of the church of *Ephesus*, he gives them a very serious exhortation; and then takes his leave of them.

REFLECTIONS.

WE are to observe in this chapter, I. First, That St *Paul* arriving at *Troas*, went to the place where the Christians of that city were met together on the first day of the week to break bread, that is to say, to celebrate the Lord's supper, and preached to them very late in the night. From

thence

thence we may gather, that the apostles and first Christians assembled themselves to serve God, and for mutual edification; that Sunday was set apart for that purpose; that the holy sacrament was administered in those meetings, and discourses made for the instruction and exhortation of the faithful; and consequently, that these practices are as old as Christianity itself, and of divine institution. II. The second thing which deserves our attention, is, that St *Paul* restored a young man to life, who fell from the upper room of the house where the believers were gathered together. This was a miracle very remarkable, which, without doubt, comforted the Christians of *Troas*, and strengthened them in the religion of Christ. But what most of all deserves to be considered in this chapter, is the discourse which St *Paul* made to the pastors of *Ephesus* before he left them: in which we see, with how great integrity, zeal, and disinterestedness he discharged his ministry; his constancy under afflictions, his great piety, the care he took to exhort and teach for three years together, both in publick, and from house to house; his settled resolution of serving the Lord faithfully, even to the end, and even of sacrificing his life with joy for the sake of the gospel. We see there also, the grave and affecting exhortations which he made to the ministers of *Ephesus*, and the ardent and tender wishes by which he recommends them to God, and the whole church over which they were appointed. From hence the ministers of the gospel may learn faithfully to discharge their office, and to fulfil the duties of it with diligence, zeal, and sincerity; to watch carefully over the Lord's flock, and to take heed that no false or offensive doctrines slide in among them; never to conceal any thing that may be of use to those who are committed to their trust; to warn them, not only publickly, but privately also; to

suffer patiently the troubles to which they are exposed; to pray continually for their flocks; and lastly, to have no regard nor value for themselves, their own interests, nor even their lives, provided they may have the satisfaction of finishing their course, and faithfully discharging the ministry which they have received from the Lord Jesus. What St *Paul* says on this occasion teaches Christians, that the office of pastor is of the greatest importance; that God is very gracious to us when he sends us faithful ministers; and that when they have warned and instructed us with fidelity, they will not be answerable for our souls if we do not do our duty. The tears which the pastors and Christians of *Ephesus* shed at parting with St *Paul*, prove how dearly they loved him; and is likewise an argument how strong that love ought to be that unites the pastors to their flocks, and how much Christians should dread to be deprived of the ministry of the faithful servants of God.

CHAP. XXI.

ST *Paul* departing from *Miletus* arrives at *Tyre*, and from thence goes to *Cesarea*, where he is warned by a prophet that he should be imprisoned at *Jerusalem*, and delivered over to the Gentiles. This prediction did not affright St *Paul*, who declared, that he neither feared bonds nor even death; and so he set forwards for *Jerusalem*. When he was arrived there, he entered into the temple with four other persons who had a vow upon them, to observe what was ordered by the law of *Moses* in the like case. Though he did this by the advice of the other apostles, to shew that he was not an enemy to the law, as he had been accused; the Jews did nevertheless raise a tumult against him, and would have put him

to death, if the captain of those that guarded the temple had not rescued him out of their hands.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THE prediction of *Agabus*, who warned St *Paul* that he should be cast into prison at *Jerusalem*, shews, that nothing befel that apostle but by the special will of God; and that it was the Lord who exposed him to those persecutions, and who thought fit that he should be delivered to the Gentiles, and afterwards carried to *Rome*, that he might bear witness to the gospel every where. The noble resolution and constancy which St *Paul* expressed, when the disciples besought him with tears not to go up to *Jerusalem*, declaring, that he was ready not only to be bound, but to suffer death for the name of the Lord Jesus, shews, that this faithful servant of God was entirely devoted to Christ, and that nothing was capable of shaking his constancy. This is an example that ought to be imitated by all Christians, but particularly by the ministers of the gospel: And, as the Christians of *Cesarea*, when they saw St *Paul* was determined to go, no longer opposed his journey, but resigned to the will of God; we ought also to submit to what God has determined, and to sacrifice our dearest inclinations to his will, as soon as it is manifested to us. What St *Paul* did, when he went to the temple of *Jerusalem* and purified himself, according to the custom of the Jews, must be looked upon as an act of prudence and charity; and which tended to prove, that he was unjustly accused of being an enemy to the law of *Moses*. This prudent behaviour of St *Paul*, teaches us to accommodate ourselves as much as we can, and to comply in indifferent matters with those who are prejudiced against us, and to neglect nothing to bring them off from their wrong notions.

notions. We find, however, that notwithstanding what St *Paul* did to comply with the Jews, they rose up against him to take away his life. These are the common effects of passion and prejudice; they so blind men, that nothing can undeceive them. Lastly, It is to be observed, that providence delivered St *Paul* from the rage of the Jews, by means of the tribune, making use of what this apostle had done in compliance with the Jews, to cause him to be seized and delivered, by that very people into the hands of the Gentiles, as had been foretold. Thus God secures those that serve him, and all that men do against them tends only to accomplish the ends of providence.

CHAP. XXII.

I. THIS is a discourse in which St *Paul*, to justify himself from the accusation of the Jews, that he was an enemy to their law and nation, gives the history of his life and conversion. II. But the Jews insisting upon his being put to death, the captain ordered he should be examined by scourging; which, however, was not done, because this apostle declared that he was a citizen of *Rome*; but he was sent back, that he might appear before the council of the Jews.

REFLECTIONS.

THE design of St *Paul*'s discourse, which is here set down, was to shew the *Jews* he was no enemy to their religion; that, so far from it, he himself had been very zealous for that religion, in which he was brought up at *Jerusalem*; and was formerly a most violent persecutor of the Christians; that the reason why he had embraced the Christian religion, and preached it every where, was in obedience

dience to the heavenly call. In this behaviour of St *Paul* towards the Jews, we may observe, that he endeavoured both to justify himself, and to pacify them, but that he did not, however, dissemble the truth. This teaches us to speak, and act always with temper and prudence, especially when we have to do with persons prejudiced against us; and, at the same time, with courage and resolution, without disguise, and without dissembling the truth through fear. The rage the Jews were in when St *Paul* said, that the Lord had sent him to the Gentiles, shews, that the chief cause of their hatred against this apostle, was the aversion they had to the Heathens. This proceedure of the Jews shews likewise, that nothing can undeceive people who labour under strong prejudices. Lastly, St *Paul*, when they were going to examine him by scourging, thought fit, in order to avoid it at this time, to plead his privilege as a citizen of *Rome*, which he had neglected to do on another occasion. He acted thus, because it was a lawful means of securing himself against their violent and unjust treatment. From whence we may conclude, that it is lawful to make use of our right, and to employ all just and reasonable methods to defend ourselves, when we are in danger of being oppressed, or unjustly treated.

CHAP. XXIII.

THIS chapter consists of two parts: I. St *Paul's* appearing before the council of the Jews. II. The relation of a conspiracy, which forty Jews had formed to take away this apostle's life, and the manner in which he was preserved.

REFLECTIONS.

WE may make four reflections upon this chapter: I. That St. *Paul*, being unjustly struck, by the order of the high priest *Ananias*, threatened him with the judgment of God; but that he, nevertheless, declared the respect he bore to his character, when he was acquainted that he who had caused him to be thus struck was the high priest; which he did not know at first. What we are to learn from hence is, that we ought to speak respectfully of our superiors; and, at the same time, that God will punish unjust judges, and such as abuse their authority. II. That St *Paul* occasioned a division between the Pharisees and Sadducees, by saying, that he was arraigned for believing the resurrection of the dead. He acted wisely, in preventing, by this means, being oppressed by the Jews, and shewing that he taught what the Pharisees themselves believed concerning the resurrection. III. That God appeared to St *Paul* by night, and bid him fear nothing, but to be prepared to go and bear witness to the truth at *Rome*. This was necessary for the support of the apostle, in the midst of those troubles which the Jews raised against him, to instruct him in the designs of providence, and to encourage him to make every where an open profession of the truth. IV. We see, in the last place, that forty Jews having conspired to slay St *Paul*, he was preserved from that danger by a young man, his nephew, who gave the captain notice of it. We may observe from this, how great the rage of the Jews was against St *Paul*; to what excesses hatred, joined with a false zeal for religion, is capable of hurrying men, and how dangerous it is to be hurried away by passion, and to make rash vows. Finally, we should admire, in this event, the means that providence uses to preserve

ſerve innocent and good men from impending dangers.

CHAP. XXIV.

I. ST *Paul* being accuſed by the Jews before the governor *Felix*, gives an account of his behaviour and his faith. II. *Felix* deſiring to hear St *Paul*, that apoſtle diſcourſed of the duties of juſtice, of temperance, and of the laſt judgment, in ſuch a manner as filled him with terror. However, St *Paul* remained a priſoner at *Ceſarea* for the ſpace of two years.

REFLECTIONS.

I. WHAT we are to conſider firſt upon this chapter, is, that St *Paul* being very unjuſtly accuſed by the Jews, before the governor *Felix*, defended himſelf in a grave, ſolid diſcourſe; in which, whilſt he juſtifies himſelf from the accuſations brought againſt him, and denies thoſe things which the Jews falſly laid to his charge, he does, nevertheleſs, make an open confeſſion of the faith and doctrine which he taught. We may learn from this inſtance of ſincerity and zeal, that neither fear, nor any other conſideration, ought to hinder us from aſſerting the truth. II. It is obſervable, that the apoſtle, giving an account of his faith and behaviour, declares he believed and taught nothing but what was written in the law and the prophets, and particularly the reſurrection of the dead, of the juſt and of the unjuſt. By what St *Paul* ſays on this ſubject, we ſee, that the doctrine of the reſurrection is a very important part of the Chriſtian religion; and, that thoſe who profeſs to believe it, ought to live a holy and unblameable life, having a conſcience void of offence towards God, and towards men. We ſhould,

should, in the last place, seriously take notice of the terror with which *Felix* was seized, when St *Paul* talked to him about righteousness, temperance, and the last judgment; of that governor's obduracy, who, finding his own conscience reproach him with injustice, impurity, and several other crimes, would not suffer the apostle to proceed. Here we see the power of the word of God, and the effects which the truth of the gospel, and especially the doctrine of the universal judgment, produce, even upon the minds of the wicked. But we likewise observe, how sinners resist that word, and the motions of their own conscience. This should therefore be a warning to us not to harden our hearts, nor ever to delay our conversion, when God causes us to hear his voice, and when we feel ourselves affected with it. The wickedness of *Felix* appeared yet farther, in his leaving St *Paul* imprisoned two years, not that he thought him guilty, but because he was covetous, and hoped to extort money from him. Thus avarice, and respect for men, are the causes of great injustice, and hinder men from attaining the knowledge of the truth.

CHAP. XXV.

I. THE Jews desire *Festus*, who succeeded *Felix* in the government of *Judea*, to send St *Paul* from *Cesarea*, where he had been a prisoner two years, to *Jerusalem*; having formed a design to kill him on the way; but *Festus* did not grant them their request, telling them, they might come to *Cesarea*, which they did. Upon this, St *Paul* appealed to the emperor, and *Festus* resolved to send him to *Rome*. II. About this time king *Agrippa* coming to *Cesarea*, and being told of St *Paul*, was desirous to see and hear him.

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS.

THE reflections to be made on this chapter are, I. That the Jews having treacherously contrived to kill St *Paul*, God did not suffer them to execute their wicked and cruel design; which should lead us to acknowledge the protection which God affords his faithful servants. II. That St *Paul*, being accused by the Jews before *Festus*, continued to maintain his innocence, and at last, desired his cause might be referred to the emperor. This proceedure of the apostle shews, that when we are unjustly accused, we may have recourse to courts of justice, and make use of all the lawful means for our defence which providence puts in our power. III. It must be likewise considered, that providence did thus dispose matters, not only that St *Paul* might not fall into the hands of the Jews, but also that he might thereby have an opportunity of going to *Rome*, and of preaching the gospel in that great city, as our Lord had foretold he should. IV. The behaviour of *Festus* towards St *Paul*, shews, that that governor, though a heathen, had more integrity and equity than the Jews, and even than the high priests and magistrates of *Jerusalem* themselves. Lastly, It is to be observed, that king *Agrippa* coming at that time to *Cesarea*, was desirous to see and hear *Paul*, and that this was an occasion with which providence furnished this apostle to speak in the presence of that prince, and a great number of people of the first rank; which turned to the justification of St *Paul*, and the doctrine he preached, as we see in the following chapter.

CHAP. XXVI.

I. ST *Paul* speaking in the presence of king *Agrippa*, of *Bernice*, of the governor *Festus*, and a great

great number of officers, and people of distinction, gives the history of his life, conversion, and manner of exercising his ministry, to that time. II. He was interrupted by *Festus*, who took him for a madman, and by king *Agrippa*, who was moved by his discourse. III. Finally, this prince, the governor, and all that were present, acknowledged the innocence of St *Paul*; but it was resolved that he should be sent to *Rome*, because he had appealed to the emperor.

REFLECTIONS.

I. IN the discourse St *Paul* made before king *Agrippa*, to give an account of his conduct, both before and after his conversion, we discover a character of wisdom, of moderation, and, at the same time, of ingenuity, steadiness, and courage, which very plainly denote the innocence and zeal of this apostle. The mild and respectful, but, at the same time, frank and sincere manner, in which he spoke upon this occasion, should teach us to answer always, as we are exhorted by St *Peter*, with meekness and humility, those who require an account of our faith, and of the hope which is in us, and never to conceal nor dissemble the truth. II. We are to consider upon this discourse, that if St *Paul* persecuted the church before his conversion, he did it in ignorance and unbelief, but that, otherwise, his life was irreproachable; and, that after the Lord had called him, he served him with great zeal. What we are to learn from hence is, that sins of ignorance are more easily pardoned than others, and that we are, likewise, more easily reclaimed from them; that God reveals himself, sooner or later, to such as are of an upright heart; and that, whenever he calls us, we ought to obey, and follow that call immediately. III. We see by the judgment *Festus* made of St *Paul*, taking him

him for a madman, that the most serious things seem folly to the worldly-minded; and the wise and respectful answer which St *Paul* returned to *Festus*, is a noble instance of moderation and courage. IV. St *Luke* mentions a very remarkable circumstance; that king *Agrippa* hearing St *Paul*, said, that he had almost persuaded him to be a Christian; to which the apostle replied, that he wished, he and all present were really and truly Christians. Upon which it may be observed, that, that prince, who professed the Jewish religion, and believed the prophets, found in the discourse of the apostle, a probability, at least, by which we may see the force of truth; but, the impression was not to salvation, since *Agrippa* took no care to be farther instructed therein. It is in vain to be but faintly affected with the word of God, or to be a half, an almost Christian; we must be so altogether, and with our whole heart. Lastly, We find, that king *Agrippa* and *Festus*, after they had heard St *Paul*, and examined the accusation laid against him, confessed his innocence, and would have acquitted him, if he had not appealed unto *Cesar*. By this means this apostle's innocence was vindicated; and, if he was sent to *Rome*, it was not as a criminal, which would have been a great hindrance to the gospel he was to preach in that city. Thus St *Paul* experienced, on this occasion, God's peculiar protection; and, the Lord fulfilled in him, what he had foretold of the apostles; namely, that they should be brought before kings and rulers, to bear witness of him; but, that he would assist them with his spirit, and put into their mouth what should be necessary for them to speak in their defence.

CHAP. XXVII.

THIS chapter contains a relation of the voyage which St *Paul* made by sea from *Cesarea* to *Rome*, where what is chiefly to be observed, is, that he was in danger of perishing, the ship in which he was having run-a-ground.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS history presents us with four remarks: I. The first relates to the continual danger St *Paul* was exposed to. After having escaped the rage of the Jews, he had like to have been cast away in his voyage to *Rome*, and besides, to be murdered by the soldiers. II. The second is, that God, who had protected him till then, was pleased to deliver him from both these dangers. We see, therefore, that nothing can hurt those whom God favours with his protection, and who serve him faithfully. III. The third, that God did not only save the life of St *Paul*, but, for his sake, preserved all those that were in the ship with him; so that when they were shipwrecked, there was not one lost. This wonderful deliverance, which St *Paul* foretold, must needs convince them, that this apostle was a true servant of God; and it is a lesson to us, that it is always a great happiness to be in the company of good men; and that, upon their account, God often spares the rest, granting them deliverance, and shewing them great favour. IV. It is to be observed, in the last place, that though God had assured St *Paul* by an angel, that none of those who were in the ship with him should perish, yet that apostle declared, that if the mariners did not remain in the vessel, they could not be saved. The promises which God makes us, should not hinder us from using those means that pru-

prudence directs, and which he himſelf has eſtabliſhed; wherefore our reliance upon God ought never to be attended with raſhneſs or negligence.

CHAP. XXVIII.

I. ST *Paul* having been ſhipwrecked upon the coaſt of the iſle of *Maltha*, ſtaid there three months, and wrought ſundry miracles. II. He departs from *Maltha*, and arrives at *Rome*.

REFLECTIONS.

THE humanity with which the inhabitants of *Maltha* received St *Paul*, and thoſe which were ſhipwrecked with him, ſhould teach Chriſtians to exerciſe hoſpitality, and heartily to aſſiſt thoſe that are in diſtreſs. The judgment which the people of that iſland paſſed upon St *Paul*, when he was bit by a viper, ſhews, that men, even the moſt rude and uncultivated, have always thought that divine vengeance does not ſuffer crimes to go unpuniſhed, which is a moſt certain truth; however, the example of St *Paul* proves, that it would be judging raſhly, to imagine that all thoſe whom any misfortune befals, are purſued by the juſtice of God. The opinion which the inhabitants of *Maltha* conceived of St *Paul*, taking him for a God, when they ſaw he was not hurt, muſt be looked upon as an effect of the ignorance of thoſe idolatrous people; but this miracle, as well as that of curing the father-in-law of *Publius*, and other diſtempered perſons of that iſland, oblige us to acknowledge the accompliſhment of that promiſe which Chriſt made his apoſtles in the xvith chapter and 18th verſe of the goſpel of St *Mark*: *They ſhall take up ſerpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it ſhall not hurt them; they ſhall lay hands on the ſick, and they ſhall recover.* Laſtly,

St *Paul* being arrived at *Rome*, ſaw not only the Chriſtians that were in that great city, but likewiſe the Jews, whom he informed of the reaſons that induced him to take a voyage to *Rome*, and to appeal to the emperor; he ſpoke of their nation, and of the Jews at *Jeruſalem*, with great temper, and afterwards endeavoured to bring them to believe in Jeſus Chriſt; and finding, at laſt, that ſeveral among them continued in their unbelief, he declared to them, that becauſe of their obdurateneſs, he would preach the goſpel to the Gentiles. This his behaviour, full of wiſdom and charity, ſhews, that we ought to omit nothing that may edify the world, or bring back thoſe who are prejudiced againſt the truth; and that, if then people will continue obſtinate, they are inexcuſable.

☞ Thus ends the hiſtory of St *Luke*, and the book of the *Acts of the apoſtles.* It may be farther obſerved, that St *Paul* remained a priſoner at *Rome* two years; that, during that time, he wrote ſeveral epiſtles, which have been preſerved in the new teſtament; that he was afterwards ſet at liberty, and made ſeveral journies; and that, returning to *Rome* about five years after, he there ſuffered martyrdom, being beheaded in the reign of *Nero*.

The End of the ACTS *of the* APOSTLES.

THE EPISTLE of St PAUL TO THE ROMANS.

ARGUMENT.

The epistle to the Romans *was wrote about the fifty seventh year of our Lord. It was placed at the head of the other epistles, because of the importance of the matters contained in it, and the dignity of the city of* Rome. *The design of this epistle is to shew, that faith in Christ, through the Gospel, is the only way of salvation; and, that circumcision, and the works of the law of* Moses, *gave the Jews no advantage over the Gentiles; and, therefore, that the Gentiles, who embraced the Gospel, were not to be obliged to submit to circumcision, and the ceremonies of the law, as certain Jews converted to Christianity pretended; and, that God might call the Gentiles, and receive them into his covenant, as the prophets had foretold. This is what we are taught in the eleven first chapters of this epistle. In the five last, St* Paul *exhorts the* Romans *to the principal duties of the Christian life, and especially to charity, forbearance, and peace; forasmuch as the divisions which prevailed at that time, between the Jews and the converted Gentiles, troubled the peace of the church.*

CHAP. I.

IN this chapter St *Paul* does two things: I. He salutes the believers at *Rome*, and expresses his joy at hearing of their faith, and the great desire

he had to go and ſee them. II. He begins to ſhew, that as all men were ſinners, they could be ſaved only by Jeſus Chriſt; and for that purpoſe he makes appear, that though God had diſcovered himſelf to the Gentiles, by the works of the creation, they did not ſerve him, but fell into idolatry, and all kinds of diſorders.

REFLECTIONS.

I. WE obſerve, at the beginning of this epiſtle, the love of St *Paul* to the *Romans*, his deſire to contribute to their edification, and his zeal to make known the goſpel in all places, and to all perſons, and even in the city of *Rome*. All Chriſtians, and particularly miniſters of the goſpel, ought to imitate St *Paul* in this reſpect; to love tenderly the church of Chriſt, and the faithful; to pray continually for them; to procure their edification with all their might, and never to be aſhamed of truth or godlineſs. II. We ſee, that although God manifeſted himſelf to the Gentiles by the works of creation, and providence, they did not glorify him, but abandoned themſelves to ſins of every kind; and, that even thoſe nations where arts and ſciences flouriſhed, fell into the moſt ſhameful idolatry, and moſt unworthy of reaſonable creatutes, and thereby provoked God's wrath againſt them. If the Gentiles were guilty before God, and inexcuſable for theſe things, as St *Paul* declares, how guilty ſhould we be, if, after God has made known himſelf to us, not only by the works of nature, but by his word, we did not ſerve him as we ought. III. What the apoſtle ſays in this chapter, with reſpect to the two principal ſins of the Gentiles, which were idolatry, and the dreadful diſorders which they fell into with reſpect to uncleanneſs, ſhews us what condition we ſhould be in, if God had not enlightened us with the light

light of the goſpel, and into what horrid actions ſenſuality and uncleanneſs may lead mankind. IV. Finally, in the laſt verſes of this chapter, St *Paul* deſcribes the vices of the heathen, ſaying, that they were filled with pollutions, covetouſneſs, injuſtice, and paſſions and ſins of every kind; and, that although they knew that thoſe who did ſuch things were worthy of death, they did not forbear committing them. We muſt own, to our ſhame, that this is the picture of the lives and manners of a great number of Chriſtians; but, it likewiſe teaches us, that they who thus imitate the heathens in their diſorders, who know, much better than they the law of God and his will, muſt expect the ſevereſt judgments.

CHAP. II.

I. ST *Paul* having ſhewn, in the foregoing chapter, that the Gentiles were ſinners, proves in this, that the Jews, who condemned the Gentiles, were ſinners alſo; and, by abuſing the light they enjoyed, and the goodneſs of God, they would appear much more guilty before his tribunal than the Gentiles, who knew no other law but that of nature and conſcience. Whence it follows, that the Jews could not pretend to be juſtified before God by their works, and, that they had no more right to ſalvation than the Gentiles. II. And becauſe the Jews gloried in having the law of God, and circumciſion, which was the token of the covenant; the apoſtle declares, that all theſe external advantages, which diſtinguiſhed them from the Gentiles, did not render them more acceptable to God, but were uſeleſs to them, whilſt they neglected to keep the law.

REFLECTIONS.

THE design of this chapter in general, is to shew that the Jews were guilty before God, as much, and even more than the Gentiles; and, consequently, that they could not be justified nor saved but by Jesus Christ. Besides which, we may gather from this chapter the following instructions: I. That those who condemn sin in others, and do, nevertheless, commit the like, will be inexcusable, and shall not escape the judgment of God. II. That God uses great forbearance towards sinners, in order to bring them to repentance; and, that those who abuse such forbearance, draw upon themselves the most terrible effects of his wrath. III. That God will one day render to all men according to their works; that he will give everlasting life to those who have persevered in well doing; but, that affliction and despair will be the portion of the wicked. IV. That, at the day of judgment, men will be judged according to the degree of knowledge which they have had; that the Gentiles will be judged by the law of nature; but, that the punishment of those, who shall sin against the law that God has given them in his word, will be much more rigorous; by which we may see what Christians are to expect, who sin against the light of the gospel. V. And lastly, St *Paul* proves, that the Jews in vain gloried in being more enlightened than the Gentiles, and having the sign of circumcision. He reproaches them with transgressing the law of God in a more criminal manner than the Gentiles themselves, and causing them to blaspheme the name of God; whence he concludes, that circumcision, and other privileges which they enjoyed, were of no use to them, and that they would be treated as Gentiles and uncircumcised. What St *Paul* says with so much evidence against

gainst the Jews, teaches us, that we ought not to boast of knowing the will of God, of being in covenant with him, and of having the external tokens of his covenant, unless we do his will; that he is not a true Christian, who is only so outwardly; but, that he shall be esteemed a Christian, who is so inwardly, and in the heart, and who is approved, not by men, but by the Lord himself.

CHAP. III.

ST *Paul* shews three things in this chapter: I. That the Jews had great advantages over the Gentiles; that if they did not believe in Jesus Christ, this did not hinder God from being always true in his promises, nor them from being justly punished; and, that though the unbelief of the Jews served to manifest the righteousness, truth, and goodness of God, yet they would, nevertheless, be wholly inexcusable. II. St *Paul* proves, by several texts of the old testament, that the Jews were guilty of the violation of the law of God; and he takes notice, that those texts did only relate to the Jews. III. He concludes from thence, that the Jews could not have been justified by the law of *Moses*, and that neither they nor the Gentiles could be justified any other way than by faith in Jesus Christ; and he says, that this doctrine was so far from being opposite to the law, that, on the contrary, it established it more strongly.

REFLECTIONS.

THE doctrine which St *Paul* teaches throughout this chapter, and which he designs to prove, is, that since the Jews were involved in sin and guilt as well as the Gentiles, they could not pretend to be justified by the law of *Moses*, and that there

was

was but one only means of juſtification for both, *viz.* faith in Jeſus Chriſt, who has made an atonement for the ſins of all mankind. Beſides this doctrine, which is the foundation and ſum of the whole Chriſtian religion, there are three particular remarks to be made upon this chapter: I. That as the privileges which the Jews enjoyed were of no benefit to them, by reaſon of their unbelief, ſo, likewiſe, the advantages which God has granted to us Chriſtians, will be uſeleſs to us, if we abuſe them; and will not ſecure us from his judgment. II. That the infidelity and ingratitude of men, do not make God unrighteous when he puniſhes them; that ſuch infidelity does even help to ſhew, that God is righteous, good, and true; but that, nevertheleſs, we muſt not think that God cannot condemn ſinners with juſtice, becauſe ſin ſerves to manifeſt his glory; for the glory of God is only accidentally the effect of ſin; the aim and deſign of the wicked is not to advance God's glory, but to ſatisfy their paſſions. What the apoſtle ſays upon this occaſion, proves likewiſe, that we muſt never do evil under a pretence that good may follow. III. And laſtly, It appears by the laſt verſes of this chapter, that the intention of St *Paul*, in what he here teaches, was not to aboliſh the law, or to render it uſeleſs; nor ought we from thence to infer, that Chriſtians are allowed to break the law, and to continue in ſin; but, on the contrary, that the doctrine of juſtification by faith is, at the bottom, the ſame with that of the law and the prophets; and, that this doctrine is ſo far from diſpenſing with the duties of holineſs, that it leads men more effectually to the practice of them, as is ſhewn by the apoſtle in the following chapters.

CHAP. IV.

I. THE apoſtle proves, in this chapter, by the example of the patriarch *Abraham*, that men are juſtified by faith, and not by circumciſion, nor by the works of the law of *Moſes*. Accordingly he obſerves, that juſtification conſiſts in the pardon of ſin, and that *Abraham* himſelf was juſtified by his faith, and that he received the promiſes of God long before he was circumciſed. II. He repreſents, in the next place, what was the virtue and efficacy of *Abraham*'s faith; and concludes, that all who believe in Jeſus Chriſt dead, and riſen again, ſhould be juſtified by faith, as *Abraham* was.

REFLECTIONS.

ST *Paul* teaches us, in this chapter, in the cleareſt manner, what juſtification is, and how we may partake of it. I. He ſhews, that juſtification, and the happineſs of ſinful man, conſiſts in the pardon of ſin, which God grants to mankind in his pure mercy; and affirms, that this favour is obtained by faith in Chriſt, and not by the works of the law of *Moſes*. This he proves clearly, by obſerving, that *Abraham* was juſtified by his faith, and the promiſes were made to his poſterity long before he was circumciſed. From whence it evidently follows, that it was not the circumciſion, but faith, that rendered him acceptable to God; that therefore circumciſion was not neceſſary to ſalvation; and all thoſe who imitate the faith of this patriarch, will be accounted his children and poſterity, and juſtified as he was. But the manner in which the apoſtle ſpeaks of the faith of *Abraham*, and its effects, is an invincible proof, that it is impoſſible to be juſtified, and obtain ſalvation, if our faith be not like that of *Abraham*'s, and our

our faith in God and his promises be not efficacious and active, inducing us to expect every thing from him, to hope in his promises, and obey him even in the most difficult matters, as did this holy patriarch. This is a most important doctrine, which we ought to comprehend well, and carefully remember, and which should serve for a rule to our thoughts, and to our actions.

CHAP. V.

THIS chapter consists of three parts: I, St *Paul* describes the fruits of justification, and the admirable effects which faith, and a conviction of the love of God, produceth in believers, even in the midst of afflictions and persecutions. II. He represents the great love of God to men, in giving his Son to die for them. III. He shews, that Christ alone is the fountain of all these precious advantages; in which view, he compares Christ with *Adam*, and shews, that if *Adam* had subjected all men, without exception, to sin and to death, even those that lived before *Moses*, and to whom God had not given a positive and revealed law, as he did to *Adam*; much more ought we to believe, that the mercy of God should extend to all mankind by Jesus Christ; from whence he concludes, that our Lord is the author of salvation, and of life, to all such as truly believe in him.

REFLECTIONS.

WE may observe, by the reading of this chapter, I. The happy condition of true believers, since being justified by faith, they are so firmly persuaded, and have so agreeable and lively a sense of the love of God, that they rejoice continually in the expectation of the glory of heaven, even in the midst

of

of their greateſt tribulations. II. We ought ſeriouſly to meditate upon what is here ſaid concerning the great love that God has ſhewn to us ſinful men, by delivering up his Son to die for us, and particularly his love to thoſe that are reconciled to him, and ſincerely believe the goſpel. This conſideration is a powerful motive to gratitude, full of comfort to believers, and very proper to confirm them in his love. III. The compariſon St *Paul* makes in this chapter, between *Adam* and *CHRIST*, tends to ſhew, that our Lord came to deliver man from ſin and death, to which they all became ſubject by the fall of *Adam*. This ought to make us look upon Chriſt, as him in whom we find a deliverance from all our evils, and who is the giver of ſpiritual and eternal life to all ſuch as believe in him, and obey him. But it likewiſe appears from hence, that none but thoſe who have a ſhare in the righteouſneſs and life of Chriſt, can obtain ſalvation; and, that ſuch as do not receive him with a true faith, and who imitate *Adam* in his diſobedience, remain in condemnation and in death.

CHAP. VI.

THE deſign of St *Paul* in this chapter is to ſhew, I. That the doctrine of juſtification by faith in Jeſus Chriſt, and of the abundant grace of God to the greateſt ſinners, which he has taught in the foregoing chapters, does by no means authorize Chriſtians to live in ſin, but, on the contrary, does powerfully draw them from it; and, that baptiſm engages them to live a holy life. II. He ſhews in the ſame view, that we ought to be ſo far from ſinning, upon a pretence that we are no longer under the law, but under grace, that it is grace which delivers us from the ſlavery and bondage of ſin, to make

us the servants of God, that is, to dedicate ourselves wholly to his service.

REFLECTIONS.

WE ought seriously to meditate on the doctrine St *Paul* here teaches us; it amounts to this: I. That we should not think, that because the grace of God is offered to men of corrupt lives, we are allowed to live in sin. II. That, far from it, the baptism which we have received, and the belief in Christ's death and resurrection, oblige us in the strongest manner to renounce sin, and to lead a spiritual life, in imitation of that of our Saviour. III. That it would be a thing highly unworthy of our calling, and of the condition of Christians, if sin should reign in us, and if we should suffer ourselves to be carried away by the inordinate desires of the flesh. But, that we ought much rather to cleave to God, live only for him, and employ our bodies and souls in his service, and to his glory. IV. That it would be an abuse of the doctrine of grace, and a great affront to Christ and his gospel, to fancy that we may sin without fear, upon a pretence that we are no longer under the law but under grace; that, on the contrary, the effect which grace ought to produce, and the design for which it is given us, is to release us from the shameful bondage of sin, and to make us submit ourselves to God and his righteousness, and cause us to bring forth the fruits of sanctification, to the end that we may obtain everlasting life. These are truths of very great weight, and the chapter in which they are contained ought to be read and meditated carefully on.

CHAP. VII.

THE apostle having taught, in the preceeding chapter, that we must not think that Christians are allowed to live in sin, on pretence that they are not under the law, but under grace, confirms the said doctrine in this chapter, and shews, I. That as a woman is at liberty to marry again when her husband is dead, so Christians may forsake the law of *Moses*, to cleave to that of Jesus Christ, and that they were delivered from the law of *Moses*, that they might be subject to Christ, who calls them, and fashions them to true holiness. II. He shews next, that this change was very advantageous to them, since they were thereby in a condition to produce the fruits of holiness, and to serve God with a new spirit. III. That he might the better explain his thoughts, he says, that the law was holy and good; that it was not the cause of sin; but, that it had not the same efficacy as the gospel, to sanctify men, and to free them from corruption. It is in this view, that the apostle represents, in his own person, the state of a man that lives under the law, and who is in subjection to sin and death; and he renders thanks to God, for having delivered him from that condition, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS is a chapter which ought to be well understood, and which must not be misapplied. The design of St *Paul* is, to teach that the doctrine of grace tends to sanctify men, as he had determined in the preceeding chapter. Thus when he makes mention of *a carnal man sold to sin*, in whom there is no good, who is a slave to the law of sin, who does not do the good which he approves, but who com-

commits the evil he disapproves; it must not be thought that he intended to describe the condition of a regenerate man, and of a Christian, that partakes of the spirit of Jesus Christ; for the apostle says, in this very chapter, that Christians are delivered from this state of sin and condemnation, to bear fruit unto God, and serve him with a new heart; and we are taught in the following chapter, that believers are no longer under the bondage of the flesh and of sin, but that they have been set free from them by Jesus Christ our Lord. But St *Paul* designed to represent, in his own person, in a figurative way of speaking, very usual with him, the condition of a man who is under the law; and who, not having faith and the spirit of Christ, is a slave to his passions. The doctrine of the apostle, therefore, amounts to this: That the law had not the same efficacy as the gospel, to deliver men from their corruption, and to sanctify them; and, therefore, that the doctrine of justification by faith, very far from indulging men in the liberty of sinning, tends to render them holy; and to free them from the slavery of their passions. From whence it follows, that those who are still engaged in this slavery, and in whom the desires of the flesh prevail, have not a true faith, and belong not to Jesus Christ.

CHAP. VIII.

I. ST *Paul* goes on to shew, that Christians are no longer subject to condemnation and to sin, like those who are under the law; and, that they do not govern themselves by the motions of the flesh, but by those of the spirit of God; whence he concludes, that believers were under an indispensible obligation to live, not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, and to behave themselves as the

the children of God, and heirs of his kingdom. II. And becaufe it might be imagined Chriftians were not reconciled with God, fince they are expofed to perfecutions, the apoftle proves, that thefe perfecutions hinder them not from partaking of the love of God. This is what he means, when he fays, that all creatures, that is, all the faithful, underwent great evils; but that, however, they waited with a firm hope for the manifeftation of the glory of the children of God. III. St *Paul* adds, that God fupported them by his fpirit in the midft of their diftreffes, that he heard their prayers, and that their afflictions were fo far from being hurtful to them, that they contributed to their happinefs, fince God had decreed that the faithful fhould arrive at glory through fufferings, after the example of Jefus Chrift. IV. From all this the apoftle infers, that the happinefs of God's elect is certain; and that God having given them his own Son, who died, and intercedes for them in heaven, no creature nor any evil can hinder them from attaining everlafting happinefs.

REFLECTIONS.

THE inftructions which the firft part of this chapter affords us are, I. That the condition of true believers is very happy, fince there is no more condemnation for them, and fince they are delivered from fin and death, by the grace of our Lord Jefus Chrift, and by the power of his fpirit. II. That the true and fureft token by which we may difcover thofe that belong to Chrift, is, that they do not live according to the flefh, but mortify the lufts thereof; that they fet their hearts upon fpiritual things, and follow the motions of the fpirit of God in their whole behaviour. III. That Chriftians therefore ought to ftudy to live a holy life; that

those who live in sin have not the spirit of Christ, nor can they please God, but are in a state of condemnation and death; whereas those who labour to mortify the deeds of the body, do partake of the spiritual life, and of the inheritance which God reserves for all his children. The second part of this chapter teaches us, I. That the troubles and afflictions of this life, are not to be compared with the joys of heaven, and are so far from being obstacles to the happiness of God's children, that they rather promote it; and that in general all things work together for good to those that love God. II. That the faithful, and those that God loves most, do sigh and groan, in expectation of this great glory which God has reserved for them, and are sometimes exposed to the severest trials; but that God supports and comforts them in their conflicts by his spirit, and even makes use of afflictions to lead them to glory, and make them conformable to Jesus Christ. III. The apostle tells us, that God will infallibly glorify all the elect; that having given them his Son, he will with him grant them every thing that is necessary; that the death and resurrection of Christ, his ascension into heaven, and his intercession, ought to fill them with a firm trust in the midst of their severest trials, and that there is no creature, in heaven or earth, that can separate them from the love of God. These considerations tend very much to the comfort of the true children of God, and are very proper to support them in their afflictions, to fill them with joy, hope, and confidence, and to confirm them more and more in the love of God and true holiness.

CHAP. IX.

ST *Paul* having taught, that the Gentiles would partake of the grace of God as well as the Jews, an objection seemed to follow from this doctrine, *viz.* That the Jews, who were the chosen people of God, were excluded from the promises, while the Gentiles, who descended not from *Abraham*, were made the people of God: This objection he answers, I. By expressing his tender regard for the Jews, which was so great, that he was willing to devote himself to death, and to be used like the worst of men, if that might contribute to their salvation. II. He shews next by the example of *Isaac*, whom God preferred to *Ishmael*, who was also the son of *Abraham*; and by the example of *Jacob*, who was chosen before *Esau*, although both had the same father and mother, and were twins, that all those who are descended from *Abraham*, are not considered as his posterity, nor comprehended in the divine covenant. III. St *Paul* lays down farther, that God may admit into his covenant, and choose for salvation, those whom he thinks fit; and that men have no reason to complain, because he does nothing, even with the wicked, but with justice and goodness; bearing long with them, and rejecting them only because of their unbelief. IV. Lastly, He concludes from what he had said, that God might call the Gentiles to salvation; which he confirms by the prophets, who had plainly foretold the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews.

REFLECTIONS.

THE abstract and substance of this chapter is, that God, who is the Lord of all things, and

who is perfectly just and supremely good, may impart his favours to whom he pleases, and that men have no reason to complain; that accordingly, he might decree salvation to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, and even justly reject the Jews because of their unbelief, as the prophets expresly foretold. This doctrine obliges us to praise the mercy of the Lord, who has vouchsafed to call us to his covenant, who were originally Gentiles; and to acknowledge, that if we be chosen for salvation, it is wholly owing to the favour of God. We are to consider, in the next place, that as all those who descended from *Abraham* did not partake of the promises of God; and that even the Jews, to whom these promises were made, have been cast off by reason of their unbelief, notwithstanding the privileges of their calling; so the advantages of the divine covenant will become useless to us, if we do not make suitable returns to the goodness which God has shewn us, and if we exclude ourselves from salvation by our ingratitude and unbelief.

CHAP. X.

I. ST *Paul* continues to treat of the rejection of the Jews, and calling of the Gentiles; he expresses a tender regard for the Jews, bearing them witness that most of them had a zeal for God; but they had rejected the gospel, because they placed their righteousness in the law of *Moses*, not observing that that law led them to Jesus Christ. II. He shews next by the words of *Moses*, that faith is a much more easy means of being justified before God, than the law was; and that this means of obtaining salvation consists in believing heartily in Jesus Christ, and in making a public profession of his doctrine. III. He adds, that this salvation was offered

offered to all men by the preaching of the goſpel; and proves from the prophets, and particularly from *Moſes* and *Iſaiah*, that the Gentiles were to be called, and that the Jews ſhould be rejected, becauſe of their unbelief and hardneſs of heart.

REFLECTIONS.

WE learn from hence, I. That there is no other means of attaining to ſalvation, but that which is offered us in Jeſus Chriſt, and that thoſe who ſeek for other means cannot be ſaved. II. That the way which the goſpel preſcribes for juſtification, has nothing in it beyond our power, or which is not even very eaſy; and that therefore we ſhall be inexcuſable if we do not lay hold of ſo precious an advantage. III. St *Paul* teaches us in this chapter, that all thoſe ſhall be ſaved, who with their heart believe in the Lord Jeſus, and confeſs him with their mouth; which ſhews, that a ſincere faith, and a public profeſſion of the goſpel, is abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation. IV. He likewiſe teaches us, that God has been pleaſed to offer ſalvation to all mankind by the goſpel; that faith comes by hearing the word of God, and that this word may be heard, there muſt be perſons ſent to preach it. This ſhould convince us of the neceſſity of preaching the goſpel, and the value we ought to have for the word of God, and the miniſters of the goſpel. V. And laſtly, We ſee that the calling of the Gentiles, and the unbelief of the Jews, were expreſsly foretold. Here we are to conſider on one hand, that God foreſaw, and, long before it came to paſs, foretold what was to happen to the Jews and Gentiles; which invincibly proves, that there is a providence which governs all things, and that the Chriſtian religion is of divine original; and on the other hand, it is a warning to us, that thoſe Chriſtians who obey not the goſpel,

and resist the heavenly call, shall be deprived of salvation as the Jews were, and shall even be more severely punished than they.

CHAP. XI.

ST *Paul* having spoken of the rejection of the Jews, asks whether God had wholly cast off his people whom he had chosen; to which he himself answers two things: I. The one is, that all the Jews were not rejected, since there were several of them who had believed in Jesus Christ; as in the time of *Elijah*, there were in *Israel* many worshippers of the true God; but that the rest of that nation continued in unbelief, as had been foretold by the prophets. II. The other is, that the Jews were not cast off for ever, but only for a time; and that their fall had given occasion to the calling of the Gentiles; but that they would one day be readmitted into covenant with God. III. After this the apostle exhorts the Gentiles to improve the goodness of God towards them, and his severity towards the Jews, lest if they should be puffed up with pride, and fall into unbelief like the Jews, they also should be cut off. To this end he compares the Gentiles to a wild olive-tree, grafted into the good olive-tree, by which last he represented the Jews.. IV. And lastly, He plainly foretels the conversion of the Jews, proving it from the prophets; and concludes this subject, adoring the wisdom and mercy of God, which appear in his dealings with Jews and Gentiles, and in what is to befal them before the end of the world.

REFLECTIONS.

THE general reflection on this chapter is, that God had not entirely cast off the Jews, since divers of them did believe the gospel, and the time will

will come when all that nation will be converted. This proves the veracity of God's promises, and is a very strong confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion, and of the divine authority of the holy scriptures. To this general consideration we may add the four following particular reflections. I. That as in the time of the apostles, and in the days of *Elijah*; there were believers among the Jews, God has always some elect in the midst of the greatest depravity. II. St *Paul* shews the use we should make of the doctrine he has taught in this epistle concerning the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles; namely, that it ought to inspire us with sentiments of fear, humility and gratitude; us I say, who are the posterity of the heathens, and induce us to make a right use of the goodness of God, and persevere in faith, lest we lose the title we now have to the grace of God, and eternal life. III. We have here a most remarkable prediction of the conversion of the whole Jewish nation; and of all other nations coming into the church. The divine authority of the scriptures, and the prophecies which have been already accomplished, should convince us of the certainty of this great and happy event. And we plainly see God intends one day to call the Jews, since they still subsist, though dispersed throughout the world for so many ages. We ought to expect with faith and joy the accomplishment of this prediction, to pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, and for the conversion of the Jews, and in the mean time to entertain a tender compassion, and true charity for that people whom God still loves. IV. And lastly, When we consider God's dealings with Jews and Gentiles, and how he proposes to unite them one day in his church, this should stir us up to adore the ways of the Lord, to celebrate his mercy and wisdom, and to say with St *Paul*, *O*

the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! — For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: To whom be glory for ever. Amen.

CHAP. XII.

AFTER St *Paul* had shewn that the Gentiles were called to salvation by the great mercy of God, the remaining part of this epistle, is taken up in setting forth the duties of the Christian life, and particularly of peace and charity. In this chapter he does three things: I. He exhorts believers to devote themselves to the service of God, and to renounce the world. II. He recommends to Christians, and especially to such as had any office in the church, or any gifts which distinguish them from others, to exercise their callings, and to employ their gifts for the public good. III. He exhorts them above all to charity; he describes the manner of exercising this virtue towards our brethren, and towards those who hate and persecute us.

REFLECTIONS.

WE may learn in general, from this and the following chapters, in which St *Paul*, after having treated of justification and the calling of the Gentiles, speaks of the duties of Christian morality; that the design of the gospel is the practice of holiness, and of good works; and that this in particular is the effect which the doctrine of our redemption ought to produce, as well as the consideration of the great mercy that God has manifested to us in his Son. This chapter furnishes us likewise with three particular lessons. I. That true piety and the service which God requires of us, consists in devoting ourselves

ſelves entirely to him, in renouncing the world, in not imitating worldly men in their manner of living, and being renewed in our minds by an entire ſubmiſſion and conformity to the will of God. II. That being all members of the body of Chriſt, which is the church, we ought to apply the gifts we have received to the advantage of our brethren; thoſe of us eſpecially, who are called to any office in the church, by diſcharging it with zeal and integrity. III. That charity is the moſt important duty, and comprehends all the reſt, and particularly the following, which the apoſtle here ſets down; which are, to love one another ſincerely; to be ready to do all good offices, to ſympathize in the good or evil that befals our brethren; to comfort and aſſiſt thoſe that are in affliction, and to live together in a ſpirit of humility, peace and unity. Charity does yet farther oblige Chriſtians to love and bleſs thoſe who hate them and injure them, to endeavour to have peace with all men, to abſtain from revenge, and to render good for evil. Theſe are the moſt eſſential duties of the religion we profeſs, and we deſerve the name of Chriſtians no farther than we ſincerely practiſe them.

CHAP. XIII.

ST *Paul* ſpeaks in this chapter, I. Of our duty to the higher powers. II. Of love to our neighbour, which is the ſum of the law of God. III. He ſhews that Chriſtians ought to live in holineſs, ſobriety and chaſtity, ſince God has delivered them from the darkneſs of ignorance, and enlightened them with the light of the goſpel.

REFLECTIONS.

THE three parts of this chapter afford us theſe three inſtructions: I. That kings, princes and magiſ-

magiſtrates, are appointed by God; and that it is from him they receive authority to govern the people, and puniſh thoſe who diſturb the peace of the ſociety; and that therefore, every one is bound in conſcience to ſubmit to the higher powers, to be faithful to them, and to render them all that is due to them. II. That the love of our neighbour is as it were the ſum of the whole law, which teaches us, that charity is a very conſiderable part of the duty of a Chriſtian; that the true way to fulfil what the law commands, is to have a ſpirit of peace, meekneſs and forbearance, and to love our neighbour ſincerely. III. St *Paul* teaches us, that ſince the clouds of ignorance, in which men formerly lived, are diſperſed by the light of the goſpel which now ſhineth, we ought to avoid ſenſuality, diſſoluteneſs, impurity, and all the deſires of the fleſh, and to live in chaſtity and temperance, following the example and divine precepts of our great Lord and maſter. And to encourage us to obſerve theſe holy laws, let us conſider the happy ſtate in which God has placed us; let us always repreſent to ourſelves, that the time of our ſalvation draws near, that our chief ſtudy may be, to partake of it though the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

CHAP. XIV.

FOR the right underſtanding of this chapter, we muſt remember, that there were in the time of St *Paul* certain Chriſtians, who having been Jews and not being ſufficiently inſtructed, ſcrupled to eat of certain meats, and obſerved a diſtinction of days, after the Jewiſh manner. St *Paul* ſhews, I. How thoſe weak perſons were to be treated. He ſays, that we muſt bear with them, and avoid all diſputes with

with them, ſince they who had different ſentiments did follow each of them the dictates of their own conſcience, believing in Chriſt, and being partakers of his grace. II. To confirm this doctrine, he repreſents Chriſtians as living only unto the Lord, who alone has an entire authority over them; and therefore, every thing that they do, ſhould be deſigned for the glory of God, and the edification of others; that no body has a right to condemn others, ſince every one is to give an account of himſelf to God. He ſhews, III. That thoſe who were better inſtructed in their Chriſtian liberty, ought not to abuſe that liberty, nor offend weak people, who made a ſcruple of eating certain meats. IV. And laſtly, he ſays, that the ſpirit of Chriſtianity is a ſpirit of peace and forbearance; that it was a great ſin to condemn, diſcourage, or give cauſe of offence to our neighbour; but that every one ought to abſtain from what he thought unlawful, and even from thoſe things which he is in doubt about, ſince every thing that is done without faith, and the approbation of our conſcience, is ſinful.

REFLECTIONS.

THE doctrine St *Paul* here teaches amounts to this: That Chriſtians are bound to bear with each other; that thoſe who are moſt enlightened, ought to have the greateſt conſideration for ſuch as are weak, and leſs knowing than themſelves; that they ought not to deſpiſe them, nor do any thing that may grieve or offend them; that we ought even to abſtain from things indifferent and lawful, when we foreſee they may be an occaſion of ſcandal to others. Theſe are maxims of charity and forbearance, from which we ought never to depart; by the right obſervation of which, the glory of God, the peace

peace of the church, and the common ſalvation, are very much promoted; while diſputes and quarrels are extremely prejudicial to the edification of the church, and therefore ought to be avoided as much as poſſible. Laſtly, We ſhould take particular notice of what St *Paul* lays down in this whole chapter, and particularly at the end of it, *viz.* That every one ſhould have a great regard to his conſcience, and that *whatever is not of faith is ſin.* This teaches us, that thoſe who act againſt their own conſcience, or even thoſe that do a thing without being well aſſured in their mind that it is lawful, are very guilty before God, even though that thing be in itſelf innocent; and that, in order to pleaſe the Lord, and enjoy peace of conſcience, our firſt care ſhould be to be well inſtructed in our duty, and then follow the dictates of our conſcience, prudently avoiding every thing that may diſturb the peace of the church, or give offence to its members.

CHAP. XV.

I. THE apoſtle continues to exhort the *Romans* to charity and forbearance towards ſuch as are weak in faith, propoſing to them, for that purpoſe, the example of Jeſus Chriſt, and beſeeching God to inſpire them with ſentiments of peace and charity. II. In this view he repreſents to them, that Chriſt was ſent to unite the Jews and Gentiles in his church, as has been foretold by the prophets; by which he would convince them, that there ought to be no diviſion among them. II. He ſpeaks next of his miniſtry, and of the plentiful fruits of his preaching among the Gentiles, and in ſeveral parts of the world. IV, and laſtly, He tells the *Romans*, that

that he intended to visit them after he had made a journey to *Jerusalem*, on account of a collection which was making for the Christians in that city. He then recommends himself to their prayers, and prays likewise for them.

REFLECTIONS.

WE learn from this chapter, I. That those who are advanced in knowledge and piety, ought to behave with great condescension and charity to those who are not come up to them, and thereby to imitate the meekness and goodness of our Lord. II. St *Paul* shews the design of this epistle to the *Romans*, and the end of his doctrine, saying, that Christ came to save, not only the Jews, but the Gentiles; and to accomplish, by this means, the promises which God had made to their forefathers by the prophets. This is a truth which we should meditate upon, in order to strengthen our faith, and excite our gratitude towards God. III. We are to consider what St *Paul* says in this chapter of his travels and labours; of the wonderful success of his ministry, of the many churches which he had founded in several parts of the world, and of his design to go to *Rome* and other places; all which is a proof of the great zeal of this apostle, his perfect charity, and above all, of the power of God, and the divine efficacy of the gospel, so visible in the miracles St *Paul* wrought, and the surprising success of his preaching. This is an example which the ministers of Christ ought to imitate as far as they are able, by labouring incessantly in the establishment of the kingdom of God. IV. and lastly, St *Paul*'s so earnestly recommending himself to the prayers of the Christians at *Rome* shews, that the ministers of Christ

do greatly ſtand in need of the prayers of the church, and that one of the chief duties of Chriſtians, is to pray for their ſpiritual guides; as it is likewiſe the duty of paſtors to offer up continually prayers for their flocks.

CHAP. XVI.

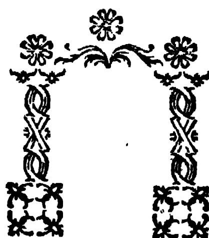
THIS chapter contains, I. The ſalutations St *Paul* ſends to ſeveral Chriſtians of *Rome* in his own name, and in the name of the miniſters of Chriſt, and the believers that were with him at *Corinth*. II. Exhortations to beware of thoſe who occaſion troubles in the church, and who teach falſe doctrines. III. His wiſhes and prayers in behalf of the *Romans*.

REFLECTIONS.

THERE are two things to be obſerved in the ſalutations contained in this chapter: The firſt is, that the goſpel had already made a conſiderable progreſs at *Rome*, and that there were in that city a great number of people, who made profeſſion of the Chriſtian religion. The ſecond reflection relates to St *Paul*'s love and charity to the church at *Rome*, and particularly to the faithful, who are here named. Such is the true ſpirit of Chriſtianity. Thus do Chriſtians ſincerely love one another, are ſtrictly united, and pray for each other, though they be never ſo diſtant; particularly for thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed by their zeal and piety. II. St *Paul* directs us next how to behave towards thoſe who teach falſe doctrines, or cauſe ſects and diviſions in the church; that is, to be upon our guard againſt them,

to avoid them, to adhere conſtantly to the pure doctrine of the goſpel, and to the paſtors who preach it. III. And laſtly, We ought to join our thanksgivings to thoſe of the apoſtle at the end of this epiſtle, and to bleſs God, that he has revealed in Chriſt Jeſus the calling of the Gentiles, and the redemption of mankind, a myſtery which, till then, had been kept ſecret from the foundation of the world; and had made known the goſpel to all nations for the obedience of faith. To this great God, only wiſe, be glory for ever, through Chriſt Jeſus. *Amen.*

The End of the Epiſtle of St PAUL *to the* ROMANS.



THE

FIRST EPISTLE of St PAUL

TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

ARGUMENT.

This epiſtle was wrote about the fifty ſixth year of Chriſt. St Paul *gives ſeveral inſtructions in it, concerning the defects and diſorders in the church of* Corinth, *particularly the diviſions among them; and upon ſeveral important articles of religion.*

CHAP. I.

I. THE apoſtle begins the firſt chapter with ſalutations, thankſgivings, and prayers. II. He reproves the *Corinthians* for the diviſions that reigned among them, on account of the miniſters who had preached the goſpel to them, ſome of them being for St *Peter*, others for *Apollos*, or for himſelf; whereas, being baptized in the name of Chriſt, and not in the name of any of the apoſtles, they ought to look upon themſelves as belonging to Chriſt alone. III. And when ſeveral endeavoured to make St *Paul* deſpicable, the apoſtle conſeſſes

feſſes, that his preaching was not attended with worldly wiſdom and eloquence; but that he preached after a very plain manner, and ſuitable to the nature of the goſpel, which is the doctrine of the croſs: God having thought fit, in his infinite wiſdom, to ſave mankind in a way which appeared weak and fooliſh to unbelievers, and the wiſe men of the world, *viz.* by Chriſt crucified; and to call to ſalvation ſuch as were the leaſt conſiderable among men.

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

I. WE may learn from what St *Paul* ſays at the beginning of this epiſtle, and the prayers he makes for the *Corinthians*, that the perfection of Chriſtians conſiſts in being enriched with all ſorts of ſpiritual gifts, ſo as to be found unblameable at the coming of Chriſt. This is what we ought all to endeavour at, and what we ought to deſire for each other. II. St *Paul*'s reproof of the *Corinthians* for their diviſions, teaches us, that there is nothing more hurtful to the church than ſchiſms and diviſions, eſpecially about matters of religion: that Chriſtians ought never to call themſelves the diſciples and followers of any miniſter or teacher, whoever he be; and that the miniſters of the goſpel, far from giving occaſion to ſuch diviſions, or of keeping them up, ought, after the example of St *Paul*, to hinder them as much as poſſible, being always actuated by a ſpirit of humility and peace, ſeeking nothing but their Maſter's glory, and the edification of his church, which is beſt promoted by unity and concord. III. It appears from this chapter, that miniſters ought to preach the goſpel in great ſimplicity, without aiming at the wiſdom and eloquence of the world, which is nothing but fooliſhneſs before God; the end of their miniſtry being to preach Chriſt crucified. IV. What St *Paul*

 here

here ſays, ſhews, that Chriſtians ought not to value riches, nobility, power, and other temporal advantages, which give no title to the grace of God, but are often an obſtacle to true faith. Laſtly, Since the doctrine of the goſpel, and particularly the croſs of Chriſt, is the means that God has choſen, in his wiſdom and goodneſs, to ſave men; we ought to cleave to *Jeſus Chriſt*, *who is made unto us wiſdom*, *and righteouſneſs*, *and ſanctification*, *and redemption*.

CHAP. II.

THIS chapter conſiſts of three parts. St *Paul* ſays, I. That he had preached the goſpel with great ſimplicity. II. That though his doctrine was plain, yet it was nevertheleſs very ſublime, and of a heavenly and divine original. III. Whence he concludes, that this doctrine being ſpiritual and heavenly, ought to be preached after the plaineſt manner; and that if it was rejected by any upon that account, it was becauſe ſuch men were carnal and earthly minded.

REFLECTIONS.

THE miniſters of Chriſt, and all Chriſtians, ſhould learn from this chapter, I. That the vain eloquence, and the falſe wiſdom of the world, ought not to have any thing to do with the preaching of the goſpel. II. That the doctrine of the goſpel, though very plain, is the moſt ſublime, and the moſt perfect that ever was preached; that it infinitely ſurpaſſes all that the moſt learned men could ever diſcover; teaching things which *eye hath not ſeen*, *nor ear heard*, *neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive*, *what God hath revealed unto us by his ſpirit*. It follows from hence, that a divine revelation was abſolutely neceſſary to our ſalvation, which

which we can attain no other way; that we ought therefore to esteem the doctrine of the gospel above all things; and that those who preach it should never depart from the Christian simplicity; and that this doctrine does not want to be supported by worldly eloquence. III. We ought likewise to observe what St *Paul* says farther, that *the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him.* This teaches us, that when men do not understand nor relish the doctrine of Jesus Christ, it is because they are carnal, full of prejudices, and earthly minded. This doctrine being altogether spiritual, can be received by none but those who are spiritual, who are weaned from the love of the world, and suffer themselves to be guided by the spirit of God.

CHAP. III.

ST *Paul* does four things in this chapter: I. He says, that he had taught the *Corinthians* nothing but the first principles of Christianity, because of their weak condition, and he reproaches them for continuing still in the same state, as appeared from the divisions that reigned among them on account of the ministers that preached the gospel to them. II. To put a stop to these divisions, he says, ministers are only instruments in the hand of God for the salvation of men, and that the whole fruit of their ministry proceeds from God alone. III. To the same end he adds, that, like a wise master-builder, he had laid the foundation, that is, he was the first who preached the gospel to the *Corinthians*; and that those who came after him, ought to take care to preach none but true and useful doctrines, which he calls gold, silver, and precious stones; but not vain and doubtful doctrines, which he compares to hay or

ſtubble; and ſays, that thoſe who preach ſuch doctrines would loſe the fruits of their labour; but that nevertheleſs if they had preſerved the fundamentals of Chriſtianity, they would be ſaved, as paſſing through the fire, and by a particular favour. IV. And laſtly, St *Paul* declares, that the church being the temple and houſe of God, he will deſtroy thoſe that hinder its edification, by teaching dangerous doctrines, and by ſtirring up diviſions, or in any other manner; and that the *Corinthians* ſhould glory in God alone, and not in thoſe who preached the goſpel, ſince the apoſtles and other miniſters were not appointed for their own advantage, but for the glory of God.

REFLECTIONS.

THE four parts of this chapter furniſh us with four inſtructions. I. That the miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt ought to propoſe his doctrine with prudence, and ſuit their diſcourſes to the capacity of thoſe whom they teach. II. When St *Paul* ſays, that he *planted, that Apollos watered, but that God gave the increaſe*, this ſhews, on one hand, that the miniſtry of paſtors and teachers is very neceſſary, it being the method which God has thought fit to make uſe of for the edification of the church; but that on the other hand, the efficacy of their preaching muſt be aſcribed to God alone. III. The third inſtruction is, that it is of great importance that none but profitable and edifying doctrines be taught in the church; and that miniſters ſhould be careful never to mingle with the eſſential doctrines of religion ſuch as be vain, uncertain, and uſeleſs, for fear of loſing the fruit of their labour, and of hindering edification. IV. When St *Paul* repreſents to the *Corinthians*, that they were the temple of God; and that, if any one defiled this temple, him would God deſtroy; this ſhould teach

teach all Christians, and especially those who are set over the church, how careful they ought to be to procure the edification of others, and avoid every thing that may give offence, and occasion trouble in it. Lastly, The apostle shews, that instead of taking occasion from the ministry of the gospel to be divided, they ought to refer this holy office, and all other spiritual advantages they enjoy, and in general all things, to the glory of God and their own salvation. This is the great design they ought always to have in view.

CHAP. IV.

ST *Paul's* design here, is to remedy the divisions that prevailed in the church of *Corinth*, on account of the ministers who had preached the gospel there. In which view he does three things. I. He says, that the *Corinthians* ought to respect the ministers of Christ, but that it was not for them to prefer some before others; that although he discharged his office with a good conscience, he did not think himself better than his collegues; that all those gifts which ministers are endowed with, do proceed from God; and that it is God alone, and not men, who is to judge of their fidelity. II. And as the persecutions to which the apostle was exposed, more than any other minister of the gospel, gave some men occasion to despise him; he takes an opportunity to describe the evils he endured, and the patience with which he suffered, and even glories in them. That so he might induce the *Corinthians* to think of him as they ought, and to imitate his patience, meekness, and humility. III. He acquaints them, that he should shortly visit them, threatning to make use of that power which God had given him, to put a stop to the disorders in their church, and to punish those who were the authors of them.

Reflections.

WE ſee here; I. What ſentiments Chriſtians ought to entertain of the true miniſters of Chriſt; namely, to eſteem and reverence them, but yet without attributing to them what belongs only to God, and without adhering to ſome, and deſpiſing others. II. The manner in which St *Paul* ſpeaks of the different opinions men had of him, teaches us, that we ought not indeed to be intirely indifferent whether men think well or ill of us; yet, that we ought not to ſet too high a value upon the opinion of men; that it is God only who can judge of our faithfulneſs, and that it is he who will make manifeſt hidden things, and the thoughts of mens hearts, and who will render to every one his due praiſes. III. That all the gifts and advantages we enjoy proceed from God; that we have nothing but what we have received from him; and that therefore, inſtead of valuing ourſelves upon them, the glory thereof belongs to him alone. IV. We ſee in the deſcription which St *Paul* gives of his ſufferings, that the faithful ſervants of God, and all true Chriſtians, may be expoſed to diſgrace and miſeries of every kind; but the example of this apoſtle likewiſe ſhews, that ſuch as are thus afflicted, far from thinking themſelves unhappy in this condition, and growing uneaſy under it, or deſiring to revenge themſelves upon thoſe who are the cauſe of their ſufferings, ought to bear all theſe evils with patience, and even with joy, for the edification of the church; and to pray for thoſe who injure them; and to be little concerned at the hatred and contempt of the world, provided they have the approbation of God and their own conſcience. The laſt verſes of this chapter ſhew, that St *Paul* tenderly loved the *Corinthians*, that it was againſt his will that he threatned them with chaſtiſement,

ment, and that he had nothing elſe in view but their edification. Such is the ſpirit of all the true miniſters of the Lord.

CHAP. V.

I. ST *Paul* reproves the *Corinthians* for ſuffering among them an inceſtuous perſon, and he delivers him to Satan; that is to ſay, to be afflicted in his body by Satan, which was an extraordinary puniſhment that the apoſtles had power to inflict. II. He repreſents to them, by the compariſon of leaven, that it is very dangerous to ſuffer notorious ſinners in the church, ſince they infect and corrupt others. III. And laſtly, he orders the *Corinthians* to cut off from among them, by excommunication, thoſe that are impure, and all ſuch as live in a ſcandalous manner, and not to conſider them as brethren, or members of the church.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter contains a very important doctrine; the neceſſity of diſcipline in the church, and eſpecially of that part of diſcipline which conſiſts in excommunication. St *Paul* reproves the *Corinthians* for not removing the inceſtuous perſon from among them; which teaches us, that when perſons, who ſtile themſelves Chriſtians, fall into ſins which diſhonour the religion of Jeſus Chriſt, the whole church ought to mourn for it, and ſhould not ſuffer thoſe perſons to remain in her communion; but that they ought to be cut off by excommunication. St *Paul* moſt expreſsly declares, that we ought not to acknowledge for brethren, nor even for Chriſtians, the unclean, unjuſt, ſlanderers, drunkards, or other ſcandalous ſinners, nor have any familiar dealings with them. This is the law of Jeſus Chriſt: This is what

the holy apoſtles have commanded in his name, and the rule appointed by them in all churches for the honour of the Chriſtian religion, and the ſaving the ſinners themſelves, and to prevent their evil examples from corrupting other members of the church, and this is what the firſt Chriſtians religiouſly practiſed; on which account, we are forced to own, that the church is not now governed as it ought to be, ſince this kind of excommunication is hardly exerciſed any where; nevertheleſs, the duty of all true Chriſtians is to avoid, as far as poſſible, all correſpondence with wicked men, and to diſtinguiſh themſelves from them, by a holy and exemplary life; and let us remember, that thoſe ſinners who are ſuffered to live in the external communion of the church, though they deſerve to be excluded from it, are not owned by Chriſt for his true members, nor ſhall they eſcape the puniſhment due to their hypocriſy and wickedneſs.

CHAP. VI.

I. THE apoſtle reproves the *Corinthians* for having recourſe to heathen judges and magiſtrates to determine their law-ſuits. II. He adds upon this occaſion, that thoſe who wrong their neighbour, ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, any more than thoſe who were guilty of impurity, and other crimes which he here mentions. III. He exhorts the *Corinthians* to pay great regard to the edification of their brethren, in the uſe of things indifferent and lawful; but above all, to avoid impurity, proving by ſeveral arguments, that this is by no means a matter of indifference, but in itſelf evil, and utterly inconſiſtent with the profeſſion of Chriſtianity.

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS.

THE reflections on this chapter are the four following: I. That Christians, being brethren, ought to avoid law-suits as much as possible; that they should endeavour to determine difficult points in an amicable way; and if they be forced to have recourse to judges, they should do it in a spirit of justice and equity, of meekness and moderation, and without giving any scandal. II. That those who wrong others, whether by unjust law-suits, or in any other manner, shall no more partake of the kingdom of God, than the impure, than thieves and covetous, or other scandalous sinners. Let it be here observed, that some of the *Corinthians* had lived in these crimes while they were heathens, but that God engaged them to renounce them all, by calling them to the Christian religion, and by cleansing them from their sins by the blood of Jesus Christ, and by the grace of his holy spirit; which shews, that our holy religion does not allow men to continue in their sins, but has a direct tendency to cleanse and sanctify them, and affords them all necessary means and assistance to that end. III. The third instruction relates to impurity. St *Paul* shews in this chapter, that this sin separates those who commit it from the communion of Christ, and suffers them no longer to be his members; that unclean persons grossly offend our blessed Saviour, dishonour their own body, which ought to be the temple of the holy Ghost, and thereby deprive themselves of that holy spirit. Lastly, He declares, that since we are redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, our bodies belong to God as well as our souls; that therefore we are no longer our own, but are bound to glorify God both with our souls and bodies. All these considerations are of great weight, and since St *Paul* alledges so many

reasons

reaſons to diſſuade Chriſtians from impurity, we plainly ſee that this ſin is very great; that we ought to have it in abhorrence, and endeavour in all reſpects to lead a pure and holy life.

CHAP. VII.

ST *Paul* anſwers in this chapter ſeveral queſtions which the *Corinthians* had propoſed about marriage. I. He gives an account of the inſtitution and duties of the marriage ſtate. II. He ſays, that there is an advantage in not being married; but that, however, Chriſtians are at liberty to marry. III. He exhorts married perſons not to ſeparate, and ſhews what was the duty, in this reſpect, of ſuch men and women as were married to heathens. IV. He orders all Chriſtians to continue in the ſeveral callings and conditions in which providence had placed them, and to live according to the will of God. V. Laſtly, He declares, that the condition of virgins, and thoſe who lived in celibacy, and of widows, was the happieſt, particularly in thoſe times of perſecution. But, however, that they were at liberty to marry.

REFLECTIONS.

FROM what has been read we may learn, I. That marriage is a holy and honourable ſtate; but that the duty of Chriſtians in that ſtate is, to live in union and concord, in purity and chaſtity, in piety and devotion, by ſetting apart ſeaſons for faſting and prayer. II. That although the condition of thoſe who do not marry be more happy, yet every man is left to his liberty; that every one ought to regulate his conduct in this matter, as he finds himſelf called to live in a married or ſingle ſtate; but, that thoſe who are not married, are bound to live in great purity and continency. III. That huſbands and wives ought

ought not to ſeparate from each other; but, on the contrary, are to live peaceably together, and to edify each other, by endeavouring to promote the ſalvation of one another. IV. That God having thought fit there ſhould be different ſtates and conditions in the world, every one ought to continue in his calling, provided it be a lawful one, and faithfully diſcharge all the duties in which his calling engages him, without endeavouring to alter his condition by ſinful methods. V. That perſons who do not marry have ſeveral advantages over others, provided they live in chaſtity, ſince they may ſerve God with leſs diſtraction in ſuch a ſtate; and in times of perſecution are more free and better able to diſcharge their duty; but that, whether people marry or whether they live in celibacy, they ought to be pure and chaſte both in body and mind. VI. Another uſeful inſtruction which St *Paul* here gives us, and which is adapted to all ſeaſons and all perſons, is, that our lives are ſhort, that our condition in this world is very uncertain, and all things here below are tranſitory and vain; for which reaſon we ought not to ſet our hearts upon them, but ſhould poſſeſs all things as if we poſſeſſed them not; that *they that weep, ſhould be as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they poſſeſſed not; and they that uſe this world, as not abuſing it: for the faſhion of this world paſſeth away.*

CHAP. VIII.

ST *Paul* examines the queſtion propoſed to him by the *Corinthians*, whether it was lawful for Chriſtians to eat of things that had been offered to idols, and to be preſent at the feaſts of the heathens in the temples of their falſe gods: To which he anſwers,

anſwers, I. That Chriſtians know very well there is but one God, and that idols are lifeleſs and vain, and could not defile the meats offered to them, and therefore that it was lawful to eat even of meats offered to idols. Nevertheleſs the apoſtle obſerves, that all had not the ſame degree of knowledge in this particular; and therefore, II. He warns thoſe Chriſtians who were moſt knowing, not to abuſe their liberty in this point, for fear they ſhould, by eating things offered to idols, give offence to weak Chriſtians, and occaſion them to ſin by eating contrary to the dictates of their conſcience, and even to fall into idolatry.

REFLECTIONS.

THOUGH we have no need to be informed at this time of the uſe of things ſacrificed to idols, ſince the idolatry of the heathens is aboliſhed, and we all know that there is but one God, and that idols are nothing; yet that does not hinder, but the doctrine which St *Paul* lays down in this chapter, may be of general uſe. He teaches us here, that all Chriſtians, and eſpecially thoſe who are beſt inſtructed, ſhould have a great regard to thoſe that are not ſo well informed, and carefully avoid giving them ſcandal. The apoſtle further informs us, that we may offend our neighbour, not only by actions directly criminal, but likewiſe by ſuch as are lawful; for which reaſon we ought to behave with great circumſpection and prudence in the uſe of thoſe things, and not always do what is lawful. He ſhews us likewiſe, that it is a great ſin to give ſcandal to any one, ſince thereby we may be the occaſion of our neighbour's deſtruction, and may be extremely guilty even againſt Chriſt himſelf. Theſe rules are of great uſe, and ought to be continually remembred, that we may do nothing, even in things lawful, which

may

may offend God, wound our conscience, or occasion our neighbour to sin.

CHAP. IX.

ST *Paul's* design in this chapter is to confirm, by his example, what he had taught in the foregoing; namely, that when the edification of our neighbour may be promoted by it, we ought to abstain even from things lawful. In this view he does three things. I. He asserts his right as an apostle, to a stipend for his support. II. He adds, that he had not made use of his right, but shewn great condescension towards all, accommodating himself to the scruples of the weak, for fear of creating in them an aversion to the gospel. III. He exhorts the *Corinthians* to imitate him, and to forego the use of lawful things, when the edification of their neighbour, and the salvation of their own souls require it. And to engage them so to do, he proposes the example of those who formerly strove in the public games of *Greece*, and who lived in great abstemiousness, abstaining from every thing contrary to the way of life they had engaged in.

REFLECTIONS.

THE general design of this chapter is to teach us, that we must not always do what is lawful, and what we may have a right to do; but that we ought to abstain from such a right, when the glory of God and the salvation of our neighbour require it; and that it is the duty of Christians to accommodate themselves as much as possible to all, to have always a regard to the edification of others, and particularly the weak, in order to bring them to the faith. Besides this general doctrine, which is of singular use, we have here some particular instructions, the chief of

of which are the three following: I. That Christian churches are obliged by the divine law, and by the command of Jesus Christ, to provide for the maintenance and support of pastors and their families. II. That the ministers of the gospel, in imitation of St *Paul*, ought to behave with much prudence and charity, disregarding their own private interest, and adapting themselves to mens weakness, and endeavouring by all means to gain to Christ as many souls as they can. III. That we cannot discharge the duties of our Christian calling, without living in great temperance; that to that end we must mortify our bodies, bring them into subjection by abstinence and labour; avoiding idleness, luxury, and every thing that indulges too much the flesh, and pursuing such a kind of life as is conformable to the precepts of the gospel, and the example of Christ and his apostles; that by these means we may obtain the glorious reward which is reserved for all those only that shall carefully discharge these duties.

CHAP. X.

THE apostle continuing the subject he had been treating of in the two preceding chapters, touching the use of meats sacrificed to idols, represents here to the *Corinthians*, I. That though the ancient *Israelites* were the people of God, and enjoyed advantages like those which Christians now do, yet they had been drawn away to idolatry and impurity, by being present at the idolatrous feasts; and that by their sensuality and frequent rebellions they had brought upon themselves the judgments of God. He proposes these examples to the *Corinthians*, and particularly to those who think themselves least in danger, and most knowing in their duty, to prevent their

their going to the idolatrous feasts, for fear of exposing themselves to temptation and falling into idolatry. II. In confirmation of this point, he adds further, that the use of the Lord's-supper, whereby Christians partake together of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, by drinking of the consecrated cup, and eating all of the same bread, did not allow them to assist at the entertainments which the pagans made in honour of their idols, since that would be partaking of their sacrifices, and having fellowship with devils and idolators, which must necessarily expose them to divine vengeance. III. He concludes that Christians might buy and eat of all kind of meats, and in private eat of any thing that is set before them, unless they were told that such meats had been sacrificed to idols; in which case they ought to forbear, not because it was sinful to eat thereof, but to avoid giving scandal to those who informed them of it. He concludes this subject with exhorting the *Corinthians* to regard in all things the glory of God, and the edification of their neighbours.

REFLECTIONS.

WHAT has been said in this chapter obliges us to consider, I. That if the ancient Jews were punished so severely for having abused the favour God had granted them, we shall be punished much more severely, if we abuse those that we have received, since they are infinitely more excellent. II. The example of the *Israelites*, who, by being present at the feasts of idolators, fell into impurity and idolatry, and the divine vengeance for so doing, is a warning to us, as St *Paul* says, to avoid all occasions of sin, and particularly to shun all sensuality and uncleanness, lest, if we suffer ourselves to be carried away by them, we be exposed to the judgment of God. III. We ought to consider, that if St *Paul*

asserts,

asserts, that Christians might not partake of the table of the Lord, and at the same time eat of that which was sacrificed to idols, the participation of the Lord's-supper is not less incompatible with a carnal and corrupt life; and that the public and solemn commemoration which we make in this sacrament of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, does indispensibly oblige us to lead a pure and holy life. IV. Let us carefully retain this general doctrine, that in all our actions, even in those that are indifferent and lawful, we ought always to have in view the glory of God, and the edification of our neighbour, as St *Paul* directs by the rule which he gives us: *whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

CHAP. XI.

THIS chapter, in which St *Paul* reproves the *Corinthians* for the disorders committed at their religious meetings, consists of two parts. I. In the first, he prescribes the manner in which men and women should behave in the church; he ordains that the men should have their head uncovered, when speaking of divine things; but that the women should cover their head; and what he says is founded upon the rules of decency, which required that women should not appear in public without being veiled, and their head covered, which was likewise the custom of the Jews, and other people in that age. II. In the second part, he reproves the *Corinthians* for their irreverence and disorder in celebrating the Lord's-supper, after their feasts of charity; and to induce them to correct those abuses, he relates the institution of this sacrament; he shews the use that should be made of it, and tells the *Corinthians*, that it was for the punishment of their indevotion in the participation of

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it, that ſeveral of them were afflicted with ſickneſſes, and ſome were dead.

REFLECTIONS.

THE directions St *Paul* gave the *Corinthians* upon what paſſed in their aſſemblies, inſtruct us in general, that order, gravity and decency, ought to be obſerved in religious aſſemblies; and particularly, that women ought to appear there with reſpect, and in ſuch a manner as may denote the ſubmiſſion, humility, and modeſty, proper to their ſex. In the next place, we ſhould make the moſt ſerious reflections upon what St *Paul* ſays here, concerning the Lord's ſupper and its uſe: It appears by this chapter, I. That this ſacrament is a ſolemn inſtitution of our bleſſed redeemer; and that, in the time of St *Paul*, it was celebrated in all the Chriſtian churches. II. That the end for which Chriſt appointed this holy ſupper, was to be a memorial of his death, until his coming again at the laſt day. III. That we ought to celebrate this ſacrament with very great reverence; that we ſhould examine ourſelves before we come to it; that thoſe who do not ſo, and who partake of it unworthily, are guilty of a very criminal contempt of Chriſt himſelf, and eat and drink their own condemnation. IV. And laſtly, it is to be obſerved, that God puniſhed the abuſe of the Lord's ſupper, in the time of the apoſtles, by ſickneſs and death: which plainly proves, that this ſacrament is a moſt holy inſtitution, and that thoſe who profane it, either by raſhneſs or hypocriſy, may expect a moſt ſevere condemnation.

CHAP. XII.

THE deſign of St *Paul* in this chapter, is to inſtruct the *Corinthians* about the gifts of the holy Ghoſt, and the uſe that is to be made of them, and to

prevent divisions in the church upon that account; for which purpose he does two things. I. He takes notice, that as they had renounced heathen idolatry, God had poured on them the gift of the holy Spirit; that God granted to the ministers of his church, and even to several of the believers of that time, divers extraordinary gifts; such as the gift of instructing others, of speaking and interpreting divers languages, of healing the sick, of prophecy, and the like; that all these gifts proceeded from the same author; but that they were different, and that all those who had received the spirit of God, did not possess the same gifts, nor in the same degree. II. He shews that these gifts proceeded all from the same spirit, and since believers composed together but one body, they ought to be employed to the common advantage and edification of the church. This St *Paul* illustrates by the comparison of a human body; and observes, that although all the members have not the same functions, nor the same dignity, they are notwithstanding all necessary, and do all contribute to the good of the body. By this St *Paul* would convince the *Corinthians*, that these gifts of the holy Ghost, which were given them for the public good, and to unite them to each other, should not be the occasion of divisions among them.

REFLECTIONS.

THAT we may improve by this chapter, it must be observed, I. That the miraculous gifts which were formerly in the church, were an undeniable proof of the divinity of the Christian religion, and a very effectual means to confirm Christians in the faith, and convert both Jews and Gentiles. For though these extraordinary gifts are not to be met with now, it appears from this chapter, that they were bestowed by God on Christians, in the time of the apostles since

St *Paul* ſpeaks of them as a thing well known at that time by every body, and very common in the church. II. What St *Paul* ſays of theſe miraculous gifts, we ſhould apply to the ordinary gifts of the ſpirit of God, and learn, that all ſpiritual gifts and graces proceed from the holy Ghoſt; that God beſtows them upon men in a different degree, both for their own ſalvation, and the good of their brethren; and, as we compoſe but one body, we ought to apply all the gifts we have received to one and the ſame end, which is, to the common edification and benefit of the church, and to live in perfect union and harmony, each of us being contented with that meaſure of grace which God has been pleaſed to diſtribute to us, and poſſeſſing it with humility. Laſtly, St *Paul* ſhews, that there are gifts more excellent, and more uſeful in their nature, than the miraculous ones beforementioned, namely, thoſe of true faith and charity, of which he treats in the following chapter; theſe are therefore the gifts which we ought moſt earneſtly to ſeek after.

CHAP. XIII.

I. ST *Paul* having treated of miraculous and ſupernatural gifts, teaches, that how great and excellent ſoever theſe are, they are of no value without charity. II. He afterwards deſcribes the nature and characters of this virtue, proves that it prevents diviſions, jealouſies, pride, provoking one another, and ſuſpicions; and this he ſays, becauſe theſe vices reigned among the *Corinthians*. III. And laſtly, He ſhews, that charity is the chief of all virtues, becauſe miraculous gifts were not always to remain in the church, whereas charity is never to have an end, here nor hereafter.

Reflections.

THIS chapter, which treats of charity, ought to be continually meditated on by all Christians. St *Paul* here shews the nature and excellency of this virtue. He proves the excellency of it on these two accounts: I. That without charity, that is to say, without a sincere love of our neighbour, without a spirit of peace, unity and meekness, all other gifts, even those which are most excellent, such as the gift of tongues and of miracles, are unprofitable, and worth nothing in the sight of God. II. That this is a virtue which will last for ever, and which will render us perfect in heaven, as it does upon earth, whereas miraculous gifts shall cease. The apostle instructs us next in the nature of charity. He says, that those persons who are endowed with this virtue, are neither envious nor haughty, nor suspicious, nor self-interested, nor peevish, nor quarrelsome; but that they are patient, meek, peaceable; that they judge charitably of their neighbour; that they do good; that they bear all things. This description of charity, and its several effects, plainly proves that charity is the sum of all other virtues, and the true way to discharge all the duties of Christianity.

CHAP. XIV.

I. ST *Paul* continues to speak of miraculous gifts, and particularly of the gift of speaking divers languages; and says, that of all spiritual gifts which God vouchsafed to particular persons, that of prophecy, that is to say, the gift of teaching, exhorting, and explaining scripture, was of most service in the edification of the church. This he confirms, by observing how useless, and even absurd it was, to speak strange languages, if those who heard did

did not underſtand them. II. He orders next, that thoſe who ſpeak thoſe languages, or who had any revelation, ſhould proceed in order, and after one another, and that there ſhould always be ſomebody to interpret what they ſaid; he directs farther, that women ſhould keep ſilence in the church; and that all ſhould be done with decency and order.

REFLECTIONS.

THOUGH the gift of ſpeaking divers languages is ceaſed in the church, and there be no revelations at preſent, as there were in the time of the apoſtles, yet we may gather from this chapter the following important inſtructions: I. That theſe extraordinary gifts were, as St *Paul* ſays, a ſtrong proof of the truth of the goſpel. II. That however excellent ſuch gifts were, they were of no advantage, unleſs applied to the inſtruction and edification of the whole church, which ought always to be the great end of religion. III. That it is of the utmoſt moment, and abſolutely neceſſary, to communicate to the people a clear knowledge of the truths which God has revealed to us, and for that purpoſe, to explain the ſcriptures familiarly and intelligibly; that accordingly, the reading of the Bible, exhortations, prayers, pſalmody, celebration of divine ſervice, and, in general, every thing that is done in the church, ought to be performed in a language which the common people underſtand, and in a plain and ſimple manner, and ſuited to every capacity. IV. and laſtly, We ought carefully to attend to the rule St *Paul* lays down throughout this whole chapter, and particularly in the laſt verſe, where he ſays, that God is not a God of confuſion, but a God of order and peace; and that all things ought to be done in the church with decency, order, and gravity. It appears from hence, that what relates to the exter-

nal part of religion, and the ſervice of God, is not a matter of indifference; and that it is the will of God, that order, decency and uniformity be obſerved in all Chriſtian churches.

CHAP. XV. 1—34.

ST *Paul* proves in this chapter the reſurrection of the dead, againſt certain perſons who denied this doctrine. For which purpoſe he lays down, I. That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is riſen from the dead; which he proves by the teſtimony of the apoſtles, and ſeveral other perſons. II. He infers from thence, that the dead ſhall riſe again, which he illuſtrates and confirms by ſeveral other arguments.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter is an excellent diſcourſe, in which the doctrine of the reſurrection is fully explained. St *Paul* teaches us, I. That the whole Chriſtian religion is founded upon the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, and that this reſurrection is a certain and undoubted fact, atteſted by the apoſtles themſelves, whoſe evidence cannot be queſtioned. II. St *Paul* ſhews, that the dead will infallibly riſe again, and the proofs alledged by him are the following: That if the dead were not to be raiſed, Chriſt would not have riſen, and our faith would be vain; that the faithful, who are dead in the Lord, would periſh for ever; that Chriſtians would be the moſt miſerable of all men, by reaſon of the perſecutions to which they were expoſed; and that the evil which *Adam* has brought upon us, by ſubjecting us to death, would not otherwiſe be remedied. He farther obſerves, that Chriſt could not be ſaid fully to reign over all things, if by raiſing us he did not deſtroy death, which is our laſt enemy; and finally,

that if there was no such thing as the resurrection, it would be a great folly for Christians voluntarily to expose themselves to all the evils which they did undergo. All these considerations prove the certainty of the resurrection at the last day; and let us return thanks to God for having built the hopes of our resurrection upon such a sure foundation; and labour to be confirmed more and more in this hope; taking heed, as St Paul exhorts, that the words and examples of the impious and profane do not stagger our faith, and studying to live a holy and unblameable life.

CHAP. XV. 35,—58.

ST *Paul*, after having proved the resurrection of the dead, shews, I. That although our bodies are destroyed by death, they will be restored to life, and that then they will be no longer corruptible, weak and mortal, as they now are, but incorruptible, immortal, and glorious; which he explains by the comparison of grain that is sown, and by some other resemblances. II. He speaks next of the change that will happen to those who shall be living at the time of the resurrection. And, III. concludes, by describing those sentiments of joy and piety, which the belief of the resurrection ought to inspire all true Christians with.

REFLECTIONS.

ST *Paul*'s design is, to teach us, that although death destroys our bodies, and reduces them to dust, they will nevertheless be raised again by the almighty power of our Lord; and that the bodies thus raised, will be incorruptible and glorious, insomuch that true believers shall all be then like Jesus Christ. Besides this, we see that those who shall be

alive at the end of the world, will be changed in an instant; and that accordingly all the faithful will become immortal. The expectation of this great glory, which is reserved for us, ought to fill us with hope and joy; to dissipate entirely the terrors of death, and to make us say with St *Paul*, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* But the hope of this resurrection of our bodies, does likewise oblige us to preserve them in great purity, and to practise continually all the duties of Christianity; this is what St *Paul* exhorts us to do in these words, which shew the use we should make of this doctrine: *Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

CHAP. XVI.

I. THE apostle exhorts the *Corinthians* to contribute to a collection that was making for the churches of *Judea*. II. He promises to come to see them in a little time. III. He recommends to them *Timothy*, and some other persons. IV. He concludes with salutations and good wishes, and by declaring, that those who did not love the Lord Jesus Christ sincerely, were exposed to the judgment of God, and ought not to be looked upon as members of the church.

REFLECTIONS.

I. WE are to observe, in the first part of this chapter, St *Paul*'s exhortations to the *Corinthians*, to engage them to assist the churches of *Judea*, for which there was a collection making, and to lay apart something on that account every first

day

day of the week. This is a lesson to us, that every one ought to give alms according to his ability, as often as there is a proper occasion; and that the first day of the week, or Sunday, was, from that time, particularly dedicated to works of piety and charity. II. The manner in which St *Paul* recommends *Timothy*, and some other zealous and godly persons, teaches us, that we ought to have in great reverence the true ministers of the Lord, who have devoted themselves to his service, and submit to them. III. The salutations we read at the end of this epistle, shew, that there ought to be a most strict communion among the churches and Christians of all parts, leading them to love one another affectionately; and especially that God's ministers ought to pray without ceasing for all the faithful, wishing them an increase of the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Finally, We ought to give a very particular attention to the anathema which St *Paul* denounces against all those that do not love Christ sincerely. He threatens them with a curse of God, and forbids us to look upon such as Christians. This denotes plainly, that it is the duty of the Church to excommunicate scandalous and profane persons; and that all such as have not a true love for our Saviour, and who neglect to keep his commandments, do by no means belong to him, but remain under the curse of God.

The End of the first Epistle of St PAUL *to the* CORINTHIANS.

THE

SECOND EPISTLE of St PAUL

TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

ARGUMENT.

This second epistle of St Paul *to the* Corinthians, *was writ about the fifty sixth year of our Lord. The principal design of the apostle in this epistle, is to defend his ministry against those who disparaged it among the* Corinthians.

CHAP. I.

AFTER the salutation, St *Paul* speaks in this chapter, I. Of the persecutions he had been exposed to in *Asia*, at *Ephesus*, and from which God had delivered him by a kind of miracle. II. He tells the *Corinthians*, in the next place, that if he had not come to see them, as he had promised, it did not proceed from levity or inconstancy, or want of kindness towards them; but that he had delayed his journey, that he might not be obliged to reprove and chastise them for the disorders that prevailed in their church.

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

WHAT St *Paul* ſays in the beginning of this epiſtle of his ſufferings, as well as of the aſſiſtance and comfort which God had afforded him under them, teaches us, I. That the faithful are ſometimes expoſed to great dangers, and extream afflictions, but that God ſupports and ſtrengthens them in ſuch a ſtate, and at length graciouſly delivers them. II. That theſe afflictions produce very happy effects, not only in the joy of thoſe who are afflicted, but likewiſe in the edification of their brethren; ſince thoſe who have thus ſuffered, are better able to comfort and encourage others in any trouble or affliction. III. As St *Paul* always deſires to be aſſiſted with the prayers of the *Corinthians*, we have reaſon to conclude that the mutual prayers of the faithful do greatly contribute to obtain from God deliverance from danger, comfort, and all the graces we ſtand in need of. The ſecond part of this chapter ſuggeſts two remarks upon St. *Paul*'s conduct. I. The ſincerity of his behaviour towards the *Corinthians* in particular; and II. His meekneſs and prudence in deferring his journey to them, that he might ſpare them. Such ſhould be the character of Chriſt's miniſters. As the maſter whom they profeſs to ſerve is love and truth itſelf, they ought to behave with ſincerity and candour, and particularly to avoid every thing that favours of levity and inconſtancy, that ſo they may thereby approve themſelves both to God and man. And on the other hand, to ſpare ſinners as much as they can, giving them time to repent, and never making uſe of ſeverity till it becomes abſolutely neceſſary, and cannot be avoided.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

I. ST *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, that it was to spare them, and that he might not have the sorrow of reproving them for their irregularities, that he forbore going to *Corinth*; and he orders them to receive into the peace of the church the incestuous person that had been excommunicated, mentioned in the former epistle, because he had repented. II. He acquaints them with some of his travels, and upon that occasion speaks of the efficacy and fruits of his ministry.

REFLECTIONS.

I. ST *Paul* shews in this chapter the most tender regard for the *Corinthians*, and great charity even to that enormous sinner whom he had delivered to Satan, but who had afterwards repented. These kind and affectionate sentiments of St *Paul*, may serve for a rule to pastors, and inspire them with a tender love for their flocks, and particularly for the greatest sinners. It is matter of great grief to the ministers of Christ, when they are forced to use severity, and the greatest joy when they observe sinners returning from the error of their ways. After the apostle had reproved the church of *Corinth* for not excommunicating the incestuous person, and had actually excommunicated him himself, he orders him again to be received into the church, and to be forgiven, because the punishment had worked a thorough repentance and reformation in him. This is that just mixture of severity and candour, which should be observed in the exercise of discipline, not suffering scandalous offenders to continue in communion with the church, but at the same time being ready to receive them again with joy and gladness, as soon

as

as they are humbled, and have given ſufficient proofs of their reformation. II. St *Paul*'s thankfulneſs to God for the glorious ſucceſs of his miniſtry, is a proof of his humility as well as of his great zeal. The true miniſters of Chriſt have no greater joy, than that of making known the will of God to men; and always attribute to God alone, and to the efficacy of his grace, the good ſucceſs they meet with. III. The laſt verſes of this chapter teach us, that the preaching of the goſpel does not produce the ſame effect in all; that it is to ſome a favour of death, that is to ſay, an occaſion of condemnation, ſince by rejecting this goſpel they become more wicked, and aggravate their puniſhment; but to others it is a ſavour of life, that is to ſay, an efficacious means to bring them to a ſpiritual life, and to ſalvation.

CHAP. III.

I. ST *Paul* repreſents to the *Corinthians*, that their converſion to the Chriſtian religion was a ſufficient proof of his calling, and that he ſtood in need of no other recommendation to them, than the teſtimony of their conſcience, and the gifts of the holy Spirit, which had been beſtowed on them abundantly; but he acknowledges at the ſame time, that the efficacy of his miniſtry proceeded only from God. II. He ſhews in the next place, that the miniſtry of the goſpel is much more excellent than that of the law, foraſmuch as this laſt was imperfect, incapable of giving life, and was not to continue always; whereas that of the goſpel was ſpiritual and eternal, giving life. From whence St *Paul* concludes, that thoſe who adhered to the ceremonies and law of *Moſes*, remained in ignorance and miſery; and that none but thoſe who cleave to the goſpel are truly enlightened, and enjoy the glorious liberty of the Sons of God.

The

The apoſtle ſays all this to defend himſelf againſt certain teachers that oppoſed him, and made a ſhew of great zeal for the law of *Moſes*.

Reflections.

THIS chapter teaches us, I That the greateſt glory of the miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, and what recommends them in the ſight of God and man, is the fruits of their preaching, and the ſhare they have in the love and affection of Chriſtians. II. That they ought not to preſume on their own ſtrength, nor aſcribe to themſelves the ſucceſs of their miniſtry; but that the honour of it is due to God alone. III. That the goſpel is much more excellent than the law, and its miniſtry infinitely more glorious than that of *Moſes*, ſince the Chriſtian doctrine gives us a much more perfect knowledge of the will of God by Jeſus Chriſt, making us partakers of the true liberty and glory of the Lord himſelf, by ſanctifying our natures, and giving us a ſure and joyful hope of immortality. From whence it follows, that if there be any who do not believe, it proceeds from wilful blindneſs; that we ought to eſteem this goſpel above all things, and that thoſe who preach it, and thoſe who make profeſſion of it, ought to do it openly and ſincerely, and without ſhame, as St *Paul* will ſhew us in the following chapter.

CHAP. IV.

I. THE apoſtle continues to ſpeak of his courage and ſincerity in the exerciſe of his miniſtry; but obſerves, that there were ſome who did not believe the goſpel, wilfully ſhutting their eyes againſt that divine light which ſhould guide them. II. He ſays farther, that he himſelf, and other miniſters, being weak men, the efficacy of their preaching

ing did not proceed from themſelves, but came from God alone. He mentions likewiſe, the perſecutions and ſufferings to which he was expoſed; and ſays, that faith in Chriſt, the hopes of the reſurrection, and the firm expectation of eternal glory, made him not loſe courage, but undergo all theſe evils with perſeverance, and even with joy.

REFLECTIONS.

THE conſiderations which occur to us here, are the following: I. That the miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt ought to put away all artifice and diſſimulation, and to ſpeak always freely and ſincerely, as in the preſence of God, ſeeking only to make manifeſt the truth in the conſciences of all men. II. That if there are any who are not ſanctified and enlightened by the goſpel, but remain in unbelief, it is wholly their own fault, becauſe the love of this world has blinded them. III. That the ſervants of God, and all Chriſtians, ought to bear with courage the ſevereſt afflictions, ſince they tend to the edification of the church, and ſince we know that thoſe who partake of the ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall likewiſe partake of his reſurrection, life and glory. IV. That the afflictions of this life can only hurt the body, but give new life and vigour to the ſoul; that they are but light, and of ſhort duration, and work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. But if we would make all this advantage of afflictions and not ſink under them, we muſt judge of afflictions, by the light of faith, not looking at the things which are ſeen, and are temporal, but at the things which are not ſeen, which are eternal.

CHAP. V.

I. THE apostle continues the discourse he had begun concerning the afflictions he underwent, and the comfort he received from the hope of the resurrection and a better life; he speaks of the happiness which the faithful shall enjoy after death; and says, that the consideration of that happiness, and of the last judgment, made him earnestly desire to leave this world, to be with the Lord; and that in this expectation, he suffered afflictions with courage, and laboured to become acceptable to God, by faithfully discharging his duty. II. He begins again to discourse about his ministry, and says, that his only aim was to bring men to the faith; which he thought a sufficient proof of the honour of his apostleship against his adversaries; adding, that the love of Jesus Christ, who died for all men, was a strong motive to him, to live only for the edification of the faithful. Lastly, He declares, he had no regard to external things, such as the advantages which the Jews enjoyed over the Gentiles, and so much boasted of. And that as God had united both Jews and Gentiles, reconciling all men in Christ Jesus, he had no other design in his ministry than to bring men to God, and make them become new creatures.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter contains very comfortable and useful instructions. We see here, I. That the faithful know and believe assuredly that tho' the body be destroyed by death, yet there is another more happy state, and never-fading glory, prepared for them; and that when they leave this body they will be with the Lord. This hope, full of comfort and glory, supports them in their afflictions and trials, and con-

tinually

tinually animates them to a holy life. II. St *Paul* teaches us in this chapter, that *We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad*; and shews, that the use to be made of this doctrine is, to live in the fear of the Lord; studying to render ourselves acceptable to him at all times and in all places, and to inspire others with the same sentiments. III. The apostle proposes another very powerful motive to the discharge of these duties, when he adds, that the great love which Christ has shewn us, in dying for our salvation, is a most pressing argument, if we understand it rightly, to live no longer to ourselves, but to employ our whole life for the edification of our brethren, and to the glory of him who died and rose again for us. Lastly, Since the design of the ministry of the gospel is, as St *Paul* teaches, to make men become new creatures, and to reconcile them to God by Jesus Christ; all those who pretend to call themselves Christians, ought to set a high value upon this gospel, and zealously improve the means which God offers them to be reconciled with him, and to endeavour to wean themselves from the things of this world, to become new creatures, by regeneration and a constant application to holiness.

CHAP. VI.

To which add the first verse of Chap VII.

THIS chapter consists of two parts. I. The apostle says, that he had endeavoured to discharge his ministry with integrity, zeal, charity, and patience, in the midst of the afflictions and disgraces to which he had been exposed; and he conjures the *Corinthians* to make suitable returns to his great

zeal and fervent love towards them. II. He exhorts them to imitate his zeal and sincerity, by making a pure profession of Christianity, avoiding all intercourse with idolators, either by marriage, or by being present at their worship, and partaking of their feasts; and by becoming pure both in body and soul.

Reflections.

I. WE have in this chapter a remarkable description of those virtues which ought to adorn the ministers of the gospel. St *Paul* teaches them, by his own example, to discharge their office with fidelity; to behave in such a manner, as to give no offence; not to dishonour their ministry, but to make it honourable by the purity of their life, by a sincere and open profession of the truth, by a perfect charity, by meekness, by humility and patience in affliction. These are the virtues which do honour to the ministers of Christ, and add great weight to the gospel they preach. II. We learn in the second place, that as pastors ought entirely to devote themselves to the service of the church, and be full of tender love for those committed to their charge, so these ought to make suitable returns, and to love them no less sincerely in the Lord. III. As St *Paul* forbids the *Corinthians* to have to do with idolators, so neither is it lawful for Christians to associate themselves with carnal men, and to join a worldly life to the profession of the gospel. Because there can be no agreement between righteousness and unrighteousness, between light and darkness; we ought therefore to avoid correspondence with worldly men, to withdraw ourselves from them, and to have no share in their sins; *to cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* This we are engaged

gaged to by the great and precious promises God has made us of being our God and Father, and looking upon us as his people, his children, and heirs of the promises.

CHAP. VII.

I ST *Paul* exhorts the *Corinthians* to entertain the same affection for him as he had for them. II. He expresses his great joy at hearing, by *Titus*, the effect of his epistle with respect to the incestuous person; from whence he takes occasion to speak of the nature and effects of true repentance.

REFLECTIONS.

WE must make the following remarks upon this chapter. I. That there ought to be a great love, and mutual tenderness between pastors and their flocks; such for instance as St *Paul* had conceived for the *Corinthians*, and which he wished they might have for him. II. The manner of the *Corinthians* receiving *Titus*, and the effect which St *Paul's* reproofs produced in them, teach us, that churches ought to receive with love and confidence the faithful ministers of the Lord, and submit to their corrections and remonstrances. III St *Paul's* great joy upon *Titus's* informing him of the happy state of the church of *Corinth*, shews, that the greatest happiness pastors can enjoy, is to see the good effects of their ministry, and have proofs of their peoples affection. Lastly, This chapter instructs us in the nature of true repentance. St *Paul* says, there is a worldly sorrow, a sorrow which is owing to the love of the world, and a regard to things temporal, which is not attended with a sincere change, and only produces death; whereas godly sorrow is attended with peace and unspeakable comfort, and

produces the most happy effects; since it fills those who are affected with it with a lively sorrow, and just indignation against themselves, inspiring them with fear and zeal, and leading them to repair, as much as possible, the evil they have done.

CHAP. VIII.

I. THE apostle informs the *Corinthians*, of the liberality which the churches of *Macedonia* had shewn in a collection made for the churches of *Jerusalem*. II. He exhorts them to imitate their example, and finish the collection which had been begun the year before; and tells them, that he sent them for that purpose *Titus*, and another person, which was probably St *Luke*.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter furnishes us with divers instructions about alms. I. The first is, that Christians are obliged to exercise charity as often as they meet with an occasion, and are able to do it, especially when it is to assist their brethren. St *Paul* says upon this subject, that persons who have devoted themselves to God, and are well instructed in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, do always discharge this duty with pleasure. II. The example of the churches of *Macedonia*, which the apostle proposes to the *Corinthians*, shews, that such as exercise charity do very great service, since they not only relieve the necessitous, but likewise set a good pattern to the whole church, and stir up others to imitate the same. III. That in works of charity, God regards chiefly the readiness and good will with which it is performed. IV. That charity ought to be done in a just proportion, so that every one may contribute according to his power, and that some

fome be not more burdened than others; and that it is but reafonable that thofe who have been reliev-ed, fhould likewife affift others in their turn. V. And laftly, The great precaution that St *Paul* ufes in the diftribution of collections, that no body might blame him, and the care he takes to put them into the hands of faithful and approved perfons, fhew, that we ought to adminifter charity with very great integrity and prudence; and that they who have the care of diftributing the alms of the faithful, ought to do it in fuch a manner as to leave no room for reproach, nor even, if poffible, for the leaft fufpicion.

CHAP. IX.

I. ST *Paul* continues to exhort the *Corinthians* to affift the churches of *Judea*, and to do it bountifully and freely. II. And that he may en-gage them to this duty, he fets before them the bleffing that charitable perfons are to expect from God; and the good effects which the exercife of charity produces, to the glory of God, and the edi-fication of the church.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter treats of alms and charity as well as the foregoing, and the apoftle pro-pofes here particularly three things, *viz.* The man-ner of giving alms; the reward of the charitable; and the good effects that charity produces. I. As to the manner, St *Paul* fays, that in order to pleafe God, we muft give as much as we are able, with chearfulnefs and liberality, becaufe *God loves a chearful giver*. II. The promifes he makes the *Corinthians*, do not fuffer us to doubt but God will reward the beneficent and charitable, even with

 tempo-

temporal blessings, by increasing their substance in such a manner, that they may always have not only what is necessary for themselves, but likewise sufficient to assist such as are in want. III. We ought likewise seriously to consider the good effects which charity produces; it rejoices the saints, comforts the afflicted, engages them to praise God, edifies the church, and gives many people, seeing the liberality of Christians, occasion to glorify God's holy name, to pray for the charitable persons, and to imitate them; all which contributes greatly to promote the gospel. These considerations should stir us up to charity; and it is particularly the duty of those to whom God has given the good things of this life, to improve what St *Paul* says in this and the foregoing chapter.

CHAP. X.

THE design of St *Paul* in this chapter and the following, is to defend himself against those who endeavoured to lessen his authority, and to render him contemptible to the *Corinthians*. It is with this view he speaks, I. Of the spiritual power God had given him, and the use he made of it for the edification of the church. II. He then declares, that he was not full of pride, like those who spoke evil of him; that he did not pretend to meddle with other mens labours, nor take the honour of them to himself; but was contented with that proportion of grace which God had bestowed on him; and moreover, that he hoped, as he had first preached the gospel at *Corinth*, he should likewise go and preach it in distant countries, where it had not yet been preached.

REFLECTIONS.

THE care that St *Paul* takes to justify and defend himself against such as blamed him, and what he says concerning his authority, and the spiritual power God had given him, shews, that it is lawful to maintain one's innocence, provided it be done with moderation, and for a good end. It proves, particularly, that although the servants of God ought to be entirely free from pride, yet they are allowed, and even obliged to assert the honour of their ministry; to make use of the authority they have received from Christ, agreeable to his intentions; resolutely withstanding all those who would obstruct the edification of the church, and having in view, not their own glory or interest, but the promoting God's kingdom, the removing every thing that may oppose the knowledge of him, and the engaging mens hearts to the obedience of Christ. We are also taught hereby, that Christians ought to reverence their pastors, and submit to their authority, since they likewise have their commission from Jesus Christ; and though they are much inferior to the apostles, yet the Lord has appointed them to rule his church. Lastly, The manner in which St *Paul* speaks of himself, and the remarks he makes upon the pride of those teachers who opposed him, should make us own, that humility is the character of the true ministers of Christ, that they ought to confine themselves within the bounds of their vocation, and the duties to which they are called; and that it is a great misfortune to the church, when its ministers are animated with a spirit of pride, presumption, envy and jealousy; and when they occasion strife and divisions.

CHAP. XI.

I. ST *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, that the great love he had for them, and his fear lest they should be seduced by those who endeavoured to vilify him, compelled him to make mention, though against his will, of the gifts and graces wherewith God had enriched him, and of what he had done for them. II. He puts them in mind, that he had preached the gospel to them without receiving any thing from them; which was more than the false apostles could say: that so he might not give them the least occasion against him. III. He shews, that he might boast of his superiority over those false apostles, who were Jews, on account of his great labours and sufferings, of which he gives us here a very remarkable catalogue.

REFLECTIONS.

WE may observe in general in this chapter that St *Paul* maintains the honour of his apostleship, but does it in a very humble manner; and that though he speaks to his own praise, yet his manner of doing it sufficiently shews that he was forced to it. From hence we may conclude, I. That we ought always to speak of ourselves with great modesty; that modesty and humility ought particularly to be found in the ministers of Jesus Christ; but that they may nevertheless assert their own innocency, and the honour of their ministry, when it is necessary for public edification. II. St *Paul*'s fear lest the *Corinthians* should suffer themselves to be drawn aside from the purity and simplicity of the gospel by false teachers, and his observing that the ministers of Satan transform themselves into angels of light, is a warning to Christians to be upon

on their guard, and carefully to distinguish doctrines and the propagators of them, and not suffer themselves to be surprized by the false appearances of piety and zeal. III. We have seen that St *Paul* would receive no stipend from the *Corinthians*, though he loved them, and was beloved by them; this he did to take away every pretence from those who sought occasion to render his conduct suspected, and to shew that he was not like the false apostles, who railed at him, and were themselves mercenary. This is an example of zeal, prudence, and disinterestedness, which ought to be imitated by all pastors, and adds great weight to their ministry, and to all their offices. IV. We should seriously attend to the account which the apostle here gives of his great sufferings, and of the many dangers and persecutions he had been exposed to, and from which God had delivered him. This is a noble proof of his zeal and sincerity, and of the truth of the doctrine he preached; it likewise shews, that Christians ought not to be terrified at afflictions, especially the ministers of Jesus Christ. Lastly, St *Paul* informs us, that besides the sufferings he endured in his own person, he was continually in care for the churches; and that no evil could befal them, but what afflicted, and as it were consumed him. Such is the spirit of all true pastors in the duties of the ministry; the care of souls, and the several wants of the people, engage their attention and their concern night and day, and they are more earnest in promoting the edification of the church, than in any other thing.

CHAP. XII.

I. ST *Paul* continues to speak of the advantages that distinguished him from other ministers; relates

relates how he was caught up to heaven; but does it in an exceeding humble and modest manner; by which it appears, he would not have mentioned it, if he had not been as it were forced to it. II. After this he tells the *Corinthians* he would shortly come to them; and as he had not been, so neither would he now be burdensome to them, he expresses a most tender regard for them, declaring he would not have writ to them as he did, but for their edification, and that he might not be obliged to use them with severity when he came to *Corinth*.

REFLECTIONS.

ST *Paul's* being caught up into heaven, mentioned in this chapter, was a glorious privilege of this apostle, demonstrating the divinity of his vocation, and at the same time, that there is a glorious and immortal life prepared for the faithful in heaven. The way in which St *Paul* relates this matter, and the excuses he makes in giving the relation of it, shew, that we may be allowed to speak of the favours God has bestowed on us; but that we must not do it unless it be necessary for the glory of God, and always in an humble sense of our own unworthiness, but by no means in a way of boasting or extolling ourselves. The apostle says, God had put a thorn in his flesh, that he might not be puffed up on account of the revelations he had had when he was caught up into paradise; and that a bad angel did, by the divine permission, cause him to feel very sensible pains in his body; this teaches us, that we are in danger of growing proud when we enjoy any considerable advantage; and that it is necessary God should visit even the best of men with afflictions, to mortify them and keep them humble. We have seen, that though St *Paul* prayed earnestly to be delivered from

from this affliction, yet the Lord did not answer his request, and said unto him, *My grace is sufficient for thee.* God never fails to grant those who ask of him those things which are necessary for the good of the soul, and to obtain salvation; but he does not always hear the prayers in which we beg to be delivered from bodily evils; but his grace, which enables us to bear them, ought to satisfy us; and he leaves us exposed to sufferings, to the end we may become more sensible of his strength in our weakness. Lastly, St *Paul* expresses the tender and paternal affection he bore to the *Corinthians*: he had nothing in view but their edification; he was ready to lay down his life for them; and was afraid he must be forced to use with severity those who had not repented. Such are the sentiments of all faithful pastors; they have a tender affection for their people, devote themselves wholly to their service, and it is always matter of grief to them to be forced to use the severity of ecclesiastical censures against scandalous and incorrigible sinners.

CHAP. XIII.

I. THE apostle acquaints the *Corinthians* again, that he designed to visit them; that he would not spare those who had not amended their lives; and since some among them questioned his authority, he would make them know by experience and by the effects, that as Jesus Christ, though he had been a weak man, now reigned by the power of God, so likewise he himself, though he was looked upon as a weak and despicable person, yet had received from the Lord the power and authority of an apostle of Christ. II. He exhorts them to examine and correct themselves, telling them he desired nothing so much as to find them in a good condition, that he might

not be obliged to deal rigorously with them, though they should call in question his character as an apostle. III. He concludes with a general exhortation to amendment and peace, and with hearty prayers for them.

REFLECTIONS.

WE may observe in this chapter the zeal, and at the same time the meekness, charity, and humility of St *Paul*. This apostle was resolved not to spare the incorrigible; yet he wished the *Corinthians* might amend, and not force him to use the power he had received from Christ as an apostle. In imitation of him, the ministers of Christ ought to be animated with a spirit of charity and humility, and as much as they can to use meekness instead of severity. Nevertheless, they ought not to spare hardened sinners, when necessity requires it. It appears likewise from hence, that it is more laudable and pleasing to God, that Christians should do their duty willingly and of their own accord, than to be compelled thereto by the severest censures of the church. St *Paul* concludes this epistle, exhorting the *Corinthians* to spiritual joy, to repentance and peace, in these expressions: *Finally, brethren, farewel; be ye perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace be with you.* This is the state which all Christians ought to aspire after, and be confirmed in more and more; and this too is the way to partake of God's love, of his peace, and of the effects of his mercy in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The End of the Second Epistle of St PAUL *to the* CORINTHIANS.

THE

THE

EPISTLE of St PAUL

TO THE

GALATIANS.

ARGUMENT.

In the epistle to the Galatians, *which was writ about the year of our Lord fifty two, St* Paul *opposes those who taught, that in order to be saved, it was not enough to believe in Jesus Christ, but it was likewise necessary to be circumcised, and to observe the ceremonies of the law of* Moses. *The apostle proves against these people, that Christians are justified by faith alone in Jesus Christ, without being obliged to the observation of those ceremonies. He afterwards exhorts the* Galatians *to continue in that liberty; but warns them not to abuse it, by falling into licentiousness.*

CHAP. I.

I. IN this first chapter St *Paul*, after the salutation, reproves the *Galatians* for departing from the doctrine which he had taught them, which was the only doctrine they ought to receive.

II. He

II. He tells them in the next place, that he had received this doctrince by the revelation of Jesus Christ, and not from any man; upon which occasion, he puts them in mind how zealous he had been formerly for the ceremonies and traditions of the Jews: that he had even been a furious persecutor of the Christians, but that God had called him to the knowledge of the truth; and that immediately after his conversion, he had preached the gospel in several places, without consulting any man, or any apostle. St *Paul* speaks thus, to shew that he was called by Christ only, and not by St *Peter*, nor by any other person; and that he had the same authority as the rest of the apostles, which the false teachers would not allow.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter presents us with two principal reflections. I. That Christians ought never to depart from the true doctrine of the gospel, which was preached and committed to writing by the apostles; and that they ought to shun all those that would preach another doctrine, or propose any way to be saved but by faith in Christ Jesus. II. The account St *Paul* gives of his conversion, and what he says to prove that he had his authority from Jesus Christ, obliges us, on one hand, to receive his doctrine as divine, and to submit to it; and on the other, to acknowledge the mercy of the Lord, and the power of his grace, towards those who are in ignorance and error; of which we see an illustrious example in the conversion of St *Paul*, and his being called to the office of an apostle, who before that had been a declared enemy of the Christian religion.

CHAP. II.

I. ST *Paul*, to support his calling and authority, and to shew that he was not inferior to any of the apostles, says, that not only his doctrine had been approved at *Jerusalem* by St *Peter*, St *James*, and St *John*; but even that he had rebuked St *Peter*, because, out of too great complaisance for the Jews, he was afraid to eat with those Gentiles who had embraced the gospel of Christ; which might have encouraged the Jews in their prejudices, and have given some reason to believe that the Gentiles were bound to submit to the ceremonies of the law of *Moses*. II. He teaches next, that both Jews and Gentiles are justified only by faith in Jesus Christ; but shews, at the same time, that this doctrine is so far from countenancing loosenesss of life, that on the contrary, faith in Christ crucified withdraws men from sin, and engages them to lead a most spiritual life.

REFLECTIONS.

WE have the two following observations to make upon this chapter: I. The authority, sincerity, and zeal, with which St *Paul* preached the pure doctrine of the gospel, so far as even to reprove St *Peter* for his too great complaisance to the Jews, which induced him to avoid all correspondence with the Gentiles. This should convince all Christians and especially the ministers of the gospel, that they ought always to act agreeable to their calling, and to walk with uprightness, according to the truth; and that we ought never to use any subterfuges, or the least dissimulation in matters of religion. II. St *Paul* establishes in this chapter the doctrine of justification by faith alone in Jesus Christ; but he teaches, at

at the same time, and very expresly too, that this doctrine does by no means authorise men to live in sin; that, on the contrary, the true faith by which we are justified does necessarily destroy sin in us and cause us to live to God. This is what St *Paul* teaches us in these excellent words, which so well describe the condition and sentiments of a true believer in Jesus Christ; *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the son of God; who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

CHAP. III.

ST *Paul* blames the *Galatians* for departing from that doctrine they had before embraced, and which teaches, that men are justified by faith in Christ without the works of the law; and to shew that that was the only true doctrine, he puts them in mind, I. That when they received it, God was pleased to communicate to them the miraculous gifts of the holy Ghost. II. He proves, by the example of *Abraham*, by the nature of the promises which were made to him and his posterity, and by the curse which the law denounces against those that should not perfectly fulfil it, that all men, even the Gentiles themselves, must be justified by faith in Christ; from whence it follows, that those who pretended to be justified by the law, deprived themselves of these promises, and continued under the curse. III. He confirms the same, by observing that the law of *Moses*, which was not given till long after the promise that God had made to *Abraham*, could not disannul the said promise; but that God had given that law by the ministry of *Moses*, he being mediator between God and the people, to keep the *Israelites* in obedience,

ence, until Christ should come; and to prepare men to receive that grace which was to render them all children of God, as well the Gentiles as the Jews; according to the promise that had been made to the patriarch *Abraham*.

REFLECTIONS.

WE are to consider upon this chapter, I. That it is a great folly, and an extreme blindness, to turn aside from the truth after we have known it, and to end ill, after having begun well. II. That the wonderful gifts of the holy Ghost, which were communicated to the first Christians, prove the divinity of the doctrine which they had embraced, and its excellency above the law. We see, III. The proofs St *Paul* alledges, to shew that it is by faith in Christ that men are justified; which proofs are taken from the example of *Abraham*, from the promises God had made him, from the curse which the law denounced against the *Israelites*, and from the time when the law was given. The manner of the apostle's reasoning upon this subject, shews that he had received from God extraordinary wisdom, and should convince us of the truth of his doctrine, since we find such solid proofs of it in the law itself, and in the covenant which God had made with *Abraham*. IV. And lastly, The wisdom and goodness of God appear after a most remarkable manner, in his having given the law to restrain men from sin, and bring them to Christ, till the time should come, when he would receive into his covenant both Jews and Gentiles. Let us from hence acknowledge, that since we have the happiness to live in these times, and become the children and heirs of God, by faith in Christ, we are bound to render him a sincere and filial obedience, and to discharge those duties to

which we are engaged by the covenant of grace, whereinto we have been received.

CHAP. IV.

THIS chapter consists of three parts. I. In the first, St *Paul* represents the difference between the condition of the Jews under the law, and the glorious state of Christians under the gospel, who have the happiness to be adopted the children of God; to shew how much the *Galatians* were to blame, in desiring to return to the yoke of the *Mosaical* ceremonies. This he does by the comparison of a child under tutors and governors, with a son who has his fortune in his own hands. II. He speaks of the great affection which he had for them, and of that which they formerly had conceived for him, and lets them know how uneasy he was on their account. III. He represents the difference there was between the covenant of the law, and that of the gospel, and between those who adhered to the one or the other, under the types of *Ishmael* and *Isaac*, the two sons of *Abraham*; one born according to the course of nature, of *Hagar* that was a servant; and the other miraculously born, according to the promise of God, of *Sarah*, who was a free woman, and the wife of *Abraham*.

REFLECTIONS.

THE general aim of this chapter is, I. To instruct us in the difference there is between Jews and Christians, and to shew how happy we are who live under the gospel dispensation, and have been adopted of God to be his children, through faith in Christ. This is a doctrine which should excite in us a lively sense of our happiness, and great gratitude towards God; it ought likewise to inspire us with sentiments

ſentiments worthy the glory of our adoption, and eſpecially induce us to live as the children of God, and to obey him willingly, and from a principle of love. II. As St *Paul* laboured with great earneſtneſs to recover the purity of the faith among the *Galatians*, and prevent them from blending the ceremonies of the *Moſaical* law with the goſpel, the miniſters of Chriſt ought to endeavour to maintain religion in its purity, and to preſerve their people from error and vice. And if the *Galatians* were to blame, to deſire, after they had been freed by Jeſus Chriſt from the *Moſaical* ceremonies, to be again under its yoke, Chriſtians are not leſs to blame, who having the knowledge of the goſpel, apply themſelves to the vain and frivolous things of this world. III. The allegory of *Sarah* and *Hagar*, by which St *Paul* repreſented the different ſtate of thoſe who wanted to remain under the covenant of the law, and thoſe who confined themſelves to that of the goſpel, may likewiſe be applied to Chriſtians; and ſets before us the difference between thoſe who ſeek their happineſs in the things of this world, and remain under the ſlavery of ſin; and thoſe who being freed from this bondage enjoy the glorious liberty of the ſons of God. IV. We may obſerve in this chapter, that the *Galatians* had once had an extraordinary reſpect and love for St *Paul*; but that he was afraid they were changed with reſpect to him, though he loved them as ſincerely as ever. Chriſtians ought to eſteem and cheriſh good and faithful paſtors; but they who having had theſe ſentiments, do not perſevere in them, are very much to blame, as well as thoſe who conceive an averſion to them becauſe they tell them the truth. As for the faithful ſervants of God, they have always the moſt tender affection for the church of Chriſt; are continually in fear for thoſe committed to their

 charge;

charge; and most heartily concerned when they do not make suitable returns for their love and care.

CHAP. V.

THERE are two parts in this chapter. I. In the first, St *Paul* exhorts the *Galatians* to continue in their Christian liberty, which, he says, consists in not being subject to circumcision, and to the ceremonies of the law of *Moses*. He tells them, that Christ would be of no advantage to them, if they retained these ceremonies; and advises them not to hearken to such as would suggest to them other sentiments, and even not to endure them among them. II. He exhorts them not to abuse this liberty, nor to take occasion from thence to live licentiously, nor to follow the desires of the flesh. He recommends to them to love one another, and to live in peace, and gives a detail of the sins to which the flesh inclines men, and the fruits which the holy Ghost produces in those who are guided by him.

Reflections.

THIS chapter is very instructive, and we ought carefully to remember the doctrine contained in it. St *Paul* explains here very clearly, how we are to understand what he has taught in this epistle; namely, that Christians are no longer under the law, and that the works of the law are not necessary to justification. That is to say, Christians are not obliged to observe circumcision, nor the other ceremonies of the law; but that they are under an indispensable obligation of leading a holy life. The apostle says, in the clearest and most positive manner, that justifying faith operates by love and good works;

works; and that we ought not to take occasion from the doctrine of justification by faith, and our Christian liberty, to live in sin and licentiousness. He shews what a great difference there is between those that live according to the flesh, and those that are guided by the spirit of God; he specifies the sins of the flesh, the chief of which are impurity, sensuality, animosities, and divisions; and declares, that those who commit these sins shall never enjoy the kingdom of God. He shews, what are the effects which the spirit of God produces in true believers. Lastly, He says, that those who belong to Christ, and in whom his spirit dwells, are distinguished by their following the dictates of that holy spirit, and by their crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts. All this shews, that the design of the gospel is to advance men in piety and holiness, and that this ought to be our chief study.

CHAP. VI.

I. ST *Paul* exhorts the *Galatians* to reprove with meekness those that fall into any fault, and to be animated towards them with a spirit of charity, humility and forbearance. He exhorts them, II. To provide for the subsistence of their teachers, and to exercise charity. III. He concludes with advising them once again, not to hearken to those that would oblige them to be circumcised, and makes a short recapitulation of his doctrine, and of this whole epistle.

REFLECTIONS.

ST *Paul* teaches us in this chapter, I. That those who have more knowledge than others, and are more advanced in piety, ought to bear with those who are not so well instructed, and reprove with

 meekness

meekneſs thoſe who ſin through infirmity, conſidering them always as brethren, and remembering that they themſelves may likewiſe fall by temptation, and that every one is accountable to God for himſelf, and muſt bear his own burden. II. That Chriſtians are obliged to provide for the maintenance of their paſtors, and to do good to all men, but eſpecially to the members of the church, and thoſe who labour in its edification. III. That theſe are indiſpenſable duties, and that God will judge us according to the manner of our diſcharging them; as St *Paul* ſhews, when he ſays, *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall be alſo reap.*— Laſtly, It muſt be obſerved and carefully remembered, what St *Paul* ſays at the end of this epiſtle, and which is the ſum of his whole doctrine; that God will not conſider whether a man be a Jew or a Gentile, whether he be circumciſed or uncircumciſed; but that what he chiefly requires is, that we become new men and regenerated. This is the meaning of the following words: *In Chriſt Jeſus neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Iſrael of God.* Amen.

The End of the Epiſtle of St PAUL *to the* GALATIANS.

THE

THE EPISTLE of St PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS.

ARGUMENT.

St Paul *writ this epistle when he was a prisoner at* Rome, *about the year of our Lord sixty one, to the church of* Ephesus, *which he himself had founded; having made a considerable stay in that city, as appears from* Acts xix. 20. *This epistle consists of two parts. In the first, which is contained in the three first chapters, he represents to the* Ephesians *the favour which God had shewed them in receiving them into his covenant, who had been most of them Gentiles. In the second, he exhorts them to holiness, and instructs them in the principal duties of the Christian life; this is the design of the three last chapters.*

CHAP. I.

I. THE apostle returns thanks to God for having chosen the *Ephesians* to salvation, and for having given them the knowledge of Christ, and the gifts of the holy Ghost. II. He prays to the Lord to increase their knowledge

and

and their gifts, and that he would give them grace rightly to comprehend the excellency of their vocation, and the glory to which they were called in Jesus Christ.

REFLECTIONS.

THE beginning of this epistle teaches us, I. That the greatest blessing God ever bestowed on men, was to give them the knowledge of Jesus Christ, to ordain the means of salvation, and call them to it by the gospel. II. That this great favour, and all the spiritual blessings we enjoy, proceed wholly from the mercy of God, who has vouchsafed to elect us to salvation in his Son. III. That our hearts ought to be affected with so valuable a blessing, and that we should praise God continually for it, saying with St *Paul*: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.* IV. That the design which God proposed to himself in thus choosing and calling us to the knowledge of himself, was to render us holy and unreproveable before him in love; and therefore that holiness ought to be our chief study, as it is the only means of attaining to glory. V. The prayers which St *Paul* offers up for the *Ephesians*, teach us, that it is not sufficient to have been once enlightened by the gospel, and to have had some sense of the love of God, but that we should always go on increasing in goodness, and labour to acquire daily more and more knowledge, and make a continual progress in holiness. VI. And lastly, Since all our happiness, and our increase in faith and holiness depend, as St *Paul* has assured us in strong terms, on our understanding rightly the excellence of the divine call, and of the heavenly treasure, we ought continually to meditate upon them, and beg of God

to

to enlighten us, and strengthen us more and more by his grace, in this beautiful prayer of the apostle: *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto us the spirit of wisdom, — that the eyes of our understanding being enlightned, we may know the hope of his calling, and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance which he has prepared for the saints.* Amen.

CHAP. II.

IN this chapter the apostle shews, I. That when all men, both Jews and Gentiles, were dead in their sins, God saved them by Jesus Christ; and he observes particularly, that they were indebted for this great benefit to the sole mercy of God, who had delivered them from a state of condemnation and corruption, and had given them a capacity of doing good works. II. He then puts the *Ephesians* in mind that they were formerly heathens, and excluded from the covenant of God; and of the favour God had shewn them, in removing the distinction which was between them and the Jews, and in uniting them so as to be but one people, and from thenceforwards to compose all of them together but one family and one temple, holy to the Lord.

REFLECTIONS.

WE are to consider here, I. That all men without exception were naturally in a state of corruption and condemnation, and dead in trespasses and sins; but that they are delivered from this dismal state, and raised to the hope of eternal life, through the great mercy of God, and by the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. From whence it follows, that if we be saved, it is by the pure grace of God, and does not proceed from ourselves.

But

But this doctrine ſhews us likewiſe, that the deſign of God was to bring men off from their corruption, and to ſanctify them; and that although we be not ſaved by works, yet *God has created us in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which he hath prepared for us to walk in*, as St *Paul* ſays. II. We ſee in this chapter, that the diſtinction which there was formerly between the Jews and Gentiles, is aboliſhed, ſince Chriſt has cauſed ſalvation to be preached unto the Gentiles, who were not in covenant with him, as well as to the Jews. This doctrine ſhould produce in us, who are deſcended from the heathens, a lively ſenſe of the goodneſs of God, and make us *remember, that we were in time paſſed Gentiles,—having no hope, and without God in the world: but now are made nigh by the blood of Chriſt; ſo that we are no more ſtrangers, but fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and of the houſhold of God.* So great a favour obliges us to great gratitude, and to live in a manner ſuitable to the glory of our condition, and to the happy ſtate in which it has pleaſed God to place us.

CHAP. III.

I. AFTER St *Paul* had taught us in the foregoing chapter, that the Gentiles who had embraced chriſtianity compoſed but one people with the converted Jews, he tells the *Epheſians* that he was a priſoner at *Rome* for preaching this doctrine; the Jews having accuſed him, and delivered him to the Gentiles for no other reaſon. He obſerves, that the calling of the Gentiles had been formerly a hidden myſtery and unknown to mankind; but that God had foretold it by the prophets, and revealed it to the apoſtles by the holy Ghoſt; and he exhorts the *Epheſians* not to be diſheartned at the afflictions he endured, and which were ſo glorious and profitable

able for them. II. He next beseeches God to confirm them in his calling, to strengthen them in faith, charity, and all kind of spiritual gifts, and give them the grace to know more and more the great and wonderful love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

REFLECTIONS.

ST *Paul* teaches us in this chapter, that the calling of the Gentiles was a mystery unknown before the coming of Christ, but that the mystery had been revealed by the holy Ghost to the apostles. This should engage us to bless God with all our heart, not only because we live in a time in which this mystery is revealed, but particularly as we are of those nations which were formerly in the darkness of idolatry, but do now partake of the promises of God by the gospel, insomuch that we have at present a free access to God by his Son Jesus Christ. Let us continually meditate upon this great mercy, which God has exercised towards us; let us have a just sense of the value and extent of this wonderful love of our Lord, to the end we may be thereby more and more excited to love him, and aspire to the glory he has prepared for us; this is the effect which the doctrine laid down by the apostle in this chapter ought to produce in us; for which purpose let us beseech God with St *Paul*, *to grant us, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthned with might, by his spirit, in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that we being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints the greatness of God's love in Christ Jesus, and may be filled with the abundance of God's grace.* Amen.

CHAP. IV.

ST *Paul* here begins to exhort the *Ephesians* to the duties of a Christian life, recommending to them, before all things, peace and concord. To induce them to it, he shews, I. That all Christians enjoy in common the same spiritual advantages; that the different gifts which Christ granted to men, after his ascension into heaven, and the different offices he had appointed in the church, did all tend to the mutual edification of the faithful; to unite them to each other, so as to make but one body; to confirm them in truth and holiness, and guide them by this means to perfection and salvation. II. After this the apostle exhorts the *Ephesians* not to live as they had done before their conversion to christianity, and as the heathens still did; but to lead a life entirely new, and conformable to the precepts of the gospel of Christ. He warns them particularly against the impurities and dissoluteness of the heathens, as well as lying, theft, wrath, obscene discourses, slander, and all bitterness and animosities.

REFLECTIONS.

FROM this chapter we may gather, I. In general, that Christians ought to live in a manner suitable to the vocation wherewith God has honoured them. II. That being all members of the same body, having all of us the same faith, the same hope, the same God, and the same Saviour, we ought to live in peace and in perfect unity. III. That since our Lord has distributed different gifts to men, and has particularly appointed, after his ascension, extraordinary ministers, such as the apostles; and ordinary ministers, such as pastors and teachers, we are bound to

to acknowledge the neceſſity and advantage of the miniſtry, to make a right uſe of it, and by its means to improve in faith, in piety, and charity. IV. That Chriſtians ſhould not be like wavering and fickle children, nor give credit to all kinds of doctrines, and to all that corrupt and deſigning men may inſinuate; but that they ſhould be ſteady in their belief; and for that purpoſe adhere inviolably to the goſpel, and to the doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, which alone can lead them to perfection and eternal happineſs. V. St *Paul* here teaches us, that the Chriſtian religion calls us to holineſs, and that thoſe who have been inſtructed in the truth by Jeſus Chriſt, are by no means allowed to live like the Gentiles, who were involved in ignorance, and for want of knowing God, abandoned themſelves to all kinds of diſorders; that the deſign of the goſpel is, that *We ſhould put off the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful luſts; and that we ſhould be renewed in our minds, and—put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.* VI. The particular ſins which St *Paul* condemns as altogether unworthy of Chriſtians, are firſt, impurity and diſſoluteneſs, which he repreſents as the reigning ſin of the heathen; next, lying and deceiving, injuſtice and theft; idleneſs, laſciviouſneſs and indecent diſcourſe; which offend our neighbour, and grieve the Spirit of God; and laſtly, anger, bitterneſs, and calumny. Chriſtianity engages us to avoid all theſe ſins; and to ſtudy purity, ſincerity, juſtice, and meekneſs; that ſo we may bear the image of our heavenly Father, and that he may own us for the diſciples of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

IN this chapter we ſee, I. Exhortations to charity and purity. St *Paul*, to diſſuade the *Epheſians*, from impurity, in particular declares to them, that that ſin would draw down upon men the wrath of God; and repreſents to them, that God had delivered them from the darkneſs of paganiſm, by enlightening them with the light of the goſpel. II. He adviſes them to behave with prudence, to redeem the time, and to avoid exceſs of wine and profane mirth; and exhorts them to ſpiritual joy and thankſgiving. III. He preſcribes the duties of huſbands and wives.

REFLECTIONS.

WE are to learn from hence, I. That the character of children of God, which we bear, obliges us to imitate him, eſpecially in his love, and in his goodneſs, and to walk in the ſteps of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſo loved us as to give himſelf for us. II. That Chriſtians cannot have too much horror for impurity; that this vice ſhould not be ſo much as named among them; that they ought never to utter any free, fooliſh or indecent words, nor any thing contrary to modeſty; but that all their diſcourſes ought to be grave and edifying; and that thoſe who tranſgreſs the laws of purity and chaſtity, and live in uncleanneſs, bring upon themſelves the wrath of God, and will have no part in his kingdom. III. That the light of the goſpel, which has ſhined upon us, delivering us from the darkneſs of paganiſm, does not allow us to imitate the heathens in their diſorders, and that ſo far from partaking of other mens ſins, we are rather to reprove them. IV. St *Paul* gives us a rule of prudence, adviſing us in all reſpects to govern ourſelves with wiſdom and caution; and to make a good

a good use of time. V. He says, that intemperance and drunkenness are vices utterly unworthy of Christians; and that, instead of abandoning ourselves to sensuality, and to carnal and profane pleasures, we should seek after that spiritual joy which the holy Ghost produces, and which excites us to edify one another, and to praise God continually in heart and mouth; *giving thanks always for all things, unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Lastly, The apostle, proceeding to particular duties, exhorts husbands and wives to live together in perfect harmony. The duty of husbands is to love their wives; and that of wives, to honour their husbands, and to be in subjection to them: the love which husbands owe to their wives, he represents by the love of Christ to his church; and the subjection which wives ought to be in to their husbands, by the church's dependance on Jesus Christ. This comparison made use of by St *Paul*, represents, in the strongest light, the necessity of these reciprocal duties between man and wife, and how sincere their union ought to be; which should convince us of the great importance of St *Paul*'s instructions upon this subject.

CHAP. VI.

I. ST *Paul* lays down the duties of children and parents; of servants and masters. II. He represents to the *Ephesians*, that since they were not only to fight against weak men, but likewise against all that is powerful in the world, and even against their spiritual enemies, the evil angels; they ought to be clothed and armed with faith, righteousness, and hope, and make use of the word of God and prayer, that they may resist and overcome their enemies. III. He concludes this epistle, by recom-

mending

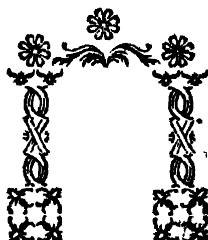
mending himſelf to the prayers of the *Epheſians*, and likewiſe by praying for them.

REFLECTIONS.

THE duties here preſcribed are very important, and highly neceſſary, not only to the good of families, and of civil ſociety, but alſo for the edification of the church. The firſt of theſe duties relates to children, who are obliged, by the command of God, as well as the law of nature, to obey their fathers and mothers, according to the will of the Lord; and that parents, on the other hand, are bound to take care of their children, eſpecially to educate them in the fear of God, and in a Chriſtian manner, giving them all neceſſary inſtructions, adding to theſe reproof and correction, when they ſtand in need of them. As for ſervants, their condition engages them to obey their maſters, and to ſerve them faithfully, whether abſent or preſent. On the other hand, maſters ſhould treat their domeſtics with gentleneſs and equity; remembering that there is a Maſter in heaven, to whom they are ſubject as well as their ſervants, and who has no reſpect of perſons. And let it be conſidered, that if maſters were to have this juſt regard for their ſervants, who in thoſe times were moſtly Gentiles, and were ſlaves beſides; maſters are now much more obliged to perform the ſame duties, ſince their ſervants are free perſons, and Chriſtians, as well as themſelves. The ſecond part of this chapter engages us to remember, I. That being in this life expoſed to divers dangers, but eſpecially to our ſpiritual enemies, and to the temptations with which we are ſurrounded, we ought to ſtand upon our guard, to reſiſt thoſe enemies, and to ſecure ourſelves from their ſnares. That for this purpoſe, we ought always to confirm and ſtrengthen ourſelves in faith, in truth, and in hope; to read and meditate

tate continually upon the word of God, and to pray with zeal and perseverance. What is said about the end of this epistle, teaches us, that Christians are obliged, by the love they owe to Jesus Christ, and for their own interest, to pray for those who preach the word of God, and who labour to promote his kingdom; and that pastors, on their part, ought likewise to pray for the churches of Christ, and to put up prayers in behalf of all Christians, as St *Paul* did for the *Ephesians*; namely, that *peace may be to the brethren, and love, with faith from God the father and the Lord Jesus Christ*; *that grace may be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*. Amen.

The End of the Epistle of St PAUL *to the* EPHESIANS.



THE

EPISTLE of St PAUL

TO THE

PHILIPPIANS.

ARGUMENT.

St Paul *wrote this epistle, as well as the former, while he was a prisoner at* Rome, *about the year of Christ sixty one, to thank the Christians of the city of* Philippi, *for the relief they had sent him to* Rome *by* Epaphroditus, *one of their pastors. He informs them of his condition, and gives them several exhortations.*

CHAP. I.

I. ST *Paul* begins with thanksgivings, and with Prayers for the confirmation of the *Philippians* in faith and holiness. II. He tells them, that his imprisonment had contributed towards promoting the gospel in the city of *Rome*. III. He declares he was disposed to glorify Christ, whether by life or death, and that he only desired to live for the advantage of the church. IV. He exhorts the *Philippians* to a behaviour worthy of the gospel, and to patience in afflictions.

RE-

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

I. WE see at the entrance of this epistle, St *Paul*'s great zeal and perfect charity, in the prayers which he offers up to God for the *Philippians*, and in the proofs he gives them of his love and joy at hearing of their stedfastness in the faith. This is a lesson to pastors, to love their flocks with a cordial affection in Christ Jesus, and to pray to God incessantly for the entire sanctification of the faithful. II. We ought to admire the ways of God's providence, who was pleased that St *Paul* should be imprisoned at *Rome*, that he might have an opportunity to preach the gospel there, and that his sufferings might serve to excite the zeal of many, who were before afraid to make an open profession of the gospel. This is one of those examples which prove that what the enemies of the truth do to destroy it, helps often to spread it the more. III. We see that though there were people who preached the gospel out of envy and jealousy against St *Paul*, yet he rejoiced because the gospel was thereby promoted. God sometimes makes use even of persons who do not act upon a good principle, to perform his work; but however it be done, those who, like St *Paul*, are animated with a true zeal, are pleased with it, even though it be a prejudice to themselves. IV. The sentiments of this apostle concerning life and death, are such as all true Christians ought to entertain; who should always be ready both to live and to die for the glory of God; their desire is to leave the world, that they may be with the Lord; and if they wish to live, it is only that they may be useful to the church, and to their neighbours. Finally, This passage of the epistle to the *Philippians*, where St *Paul* says, he desired to leave this world to be with the Lord, proves clear-

 ly

ly, that the faithful are happy and with the Lord after their death, in expectation of the resurrection: for if it was not ſo, this apoſtle would have had no reaſon to deſire death rather than life. V. The cloſe of this chapter ſhews, that the duty of all Chriſtians is, to behave in a manner worthy of the goſpel, and not to be ſtaggered at afflictions, eſpecially when they undergo them for the ſake of Chriſt.

CHAP. II.

I. ST *Paul* exhorts the *Philippians* very affectionately to concord and humility. And to this end he propoſes the example of Chriſt's humiliation, and of the glory to which he was afterwards exalted. And repreſents to them, that this is an inducement to work out their ſalvation with humility and perſeverance. II. He exhorts them to live in peace, and by a pure and innocent behaviour to edify the heathens among whom they lived; and he aſſures them, he would ſuffer death with joy, if it were neceſſary for the confirmation of their faith. III. He promiſes to ſend *Timothy* to them, whoſe zeal and faithfulneſs he praiſes. He likewiſe recommends to them *Epaphroditus*, one of their paſtors, who was returning to them after recovering from a great ſickneſs.

REFLECTIONS.

WE learn from hence, I. That one of the moſt important duties of Chriſtians, is true charity; that they ſhould live together in perfect unity, and in a ſpirit of humility, and that they ſhould promote the intereſts of others as well as their own. II. St *Paul* ſets before our eyes the profound humiliation of Jeſus Chriſt, who, though he was equal

to

to God, abased himself, even to the death of the cross, and who by his obedience and sufferings was exalted to supreme glory. The apostle proposes this example, to teach us, that if we have the same sentiments of humility as our Saviour had, we shall likewise attain to glory. III. This serious exhortation, *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*, should inspire us all with a great zeal, to labour continually with profound humility in the work of our salvation; making use for that purpose of the means which God affords us, among which one of the most effectual is, to have recourse to him by prayer, forasmuch as it is *God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*. IV. This chapter further teaches us, that Christians ought to avoid quarrels and disputes, and distinguish themselves by an unblameable behaviour, so that they may shine like burning lights in a crooked and perverse generation. V. St *Paul's* declaration, that he was ready to sacrifice his blood and his life with pleasure, for the edification of the *Philippians*, shews, that the true ministers of Christ are entirely devoted to the service of God and of his church; that this is the end of all their labours; and that when it is necessary to lose even their lives for the advancement of the salvation of men, they ought to lay them down with gladness. VI. The testimony which the apostle gives of the sincerity and great zeal of *Timothy*; what he says of *Epaphroditus*, of his sickness and recovery, and the earnest manner in which he recommends him to the *Philippians*, shews, that true pastors, who only seek the interests of Christ, and discharge their function with zeal and sincerity, deserve all the love and all the esteem of Christians; that the lives and preservation of such ought to be very dear to the church; that they ought to be received with all demonstrations of of joy, and to be highly esteemed by their people,

who ſhould ſubmit to their inſtructions and exhortations.

CHAP. III.

I. ST *Paul* adviſes the *Philippians* not to hearken to falſe teachers, who preached up the obſervation of circumciſion, and boaſted of the external advantages that diſtinguiſhed the Jews from other nations. II. He ſhews by his example, that all thoſe advantages which he had been in poſſeſſion of when he lived in Judaiſm, were unprofitable, and even prejudicial to ſalvation; and he ſays, that it was for that reaſon he had renounced them, to adhere to Chriſt alone; and that he continually endeavoured to advance more and more in the knowledge of our Lord, and to attain to perfection and glory, by an entire conformity to his ſufferings and reſurrection. III. He exhorts the *Philippians* to come into his ſentiments, and to avoid their falſe teachers, whoſe character he deſcribes, ſaying, that they were carnal men; whereas true Chriſtians are ſpiritual, and do only aim at heaven.

REFLECTIONS.

WE are to obſerve in general in this whole chapter, that as St *Paul* exhorted the *Philippians* to beware of falſe teachers, who endeavoured to enſlave them to the ceremonies of the law of *Moſes*, it is very neceſſary that Chriſtians ſhould fortify themſelves againſt error, and all that is contrary to the purity of faith. Beſides which, we may gather from this chapter theſe four diſtinguiſhing marks of true Chriſtians. I. The firſt is, that they have the ſame opinion of the things of the world, as St *Paul* had of the external advantages he poſſeſſed when he was a Jew; that is to ſay, that they

they set no value upon those things in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ their Lord; and that they consider them even as hurtful, when they hinder them from following their heavenly calling. II. The second character of true Christians is, that, in imitation of St *Paul*, they aim at perfection, seeking always to become more and more like unto their Saviour, leaving the things which are behind them, advancing towards those before them, and by continual endeavours pressing to the mark and prize of their calling in Christ Jesus. III. The third character of the faithful is, that being united all in one common faith, and the belief of the same essential truths, they live in peace; and if they should have different sentiments in matters of little importance, their difference of opinion will not cause a division and separation among them. IV. The last character St *Paul* gives of the true disciples of our Lord is, that whereas carnal men do only love the things of the world, and have no other God but their belly; true Christians live after a spiritual and a heavenly manner, behaving themselves as those whose country is heaven, from whence they expect their Lord and Saviour, who will come from thence to raise them up, and to receive them into the glory of his kingdom.

CHAP. IV.

THIS chapter consists of two parts. I. The first contains exhortations to perseverance, unity, and spiritual joy; to confidence in God, and to a holy life. II. In the second, St *Paul* thanks the *Philippians* for the contributions they had sent him for his subsistence in prison; and prays for them.

REFLECTIONS.

THE first part of this chapter instructs us in these five duties. I. The first is, to persevere continually in the purity of faith, and in piety. II. The apostle's exhortation to *Euodias* and *Syntyche*, two Christian women, who, without doubt, differed in their opinion upon some article of religion, to live in peace, shews, that Christians ought to live in unity, to endeavour to be of one mind in matters of faith, and to bear with each other, if they do not in every respect think alike. III. The third duty, is to rejoice always in God with a spiritual joy. IV. The fourth, not to be full of the cares of this life, but to have recourse to God by prayer in all our wants, and to trust in his providence. V. The fifth duty is of a very great extent; it is to adhere constantly to all things that are honest, just, pure, holy, virtuous, and praise-worthy. There may be two reflections made upon the second part of this chapter. I. First, St *Paul* teaches us, by his example, to be contented in whatever state or condition we find ourselves, whether we be in poverty, or whether we be in plenty. II. Secondly, The thanks which this apostle returns the *Philippians* for what they had sent to him at *Rome*, to support him when a prisoner, express great disinterestedness, and at the same time no less gratitude; and the prayers he offers to God for them, upon that occasion, teach us, that it is a work very agreeable to God, to assist such as are in want, and particularly his faithful servants, and those that suffer for the gospel; that these works of charity rejoice and comfort good men, and that they are sacrifices of a sweet savour, which God accepts, and rewards according to the riches of his grace, with glory in Jesus Christ.

The End of the Epistle of St PAUL *to the* PHILIPPIANS.

THE

THE

EPISTLE of St PAUL

TO THE

COLOSSIANS.

ARGUMENT.

This is likewise an epistle which St Paul *writ whilst he was a prisoner at* Rome *the first time, in the year of our Lord sixty-one. The design of it is to exhort the* Colossians *not to suffer themselves to be seduced by certain false teachers, who would persuade them to join the ceremonies of the law, and the notions of the heathen philosophers, to the Christian faith. This is the subject of the two first chapters. In the two last, he prescribes the principal duties of piety and holiness.*

CHAP. I.

THIS chapter consists of two parts. I. St *Paul* praises God that the gospel had been preached to the *Colossians* by *Epaphras*, and had had great success among them; and he beseeches

seeches the Lord to fill them more and more with the knowledge of his will, and with all kind of spiritual gifts. II. The apostle represents Christ as the only author of salvation; as him who created the angels and all other creatures; and by whom all men, the Gentiles in particular, have been perfectly reconciled to God. St *Paul* speaks thus to the *Colossians*, to convince them that the doctrine of Christ was sufficient to bring men to perfection and salvation, without any necessity of the law of *Moses*, or any other doctrines. III. Lastly, He assures them that the sufferings which he endured, ought not to stagger them in the profession of the gospel; and that the end of his preaching was to bring the Gentiles and all men to salvation.

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

I. THE praises and thanksgivings with which St *Paul* begins this epistle, teach us, that God has granted us the greatest blessing in causing his gospel to be preached among us, and that we ought to praise him continually for it; but this blessing can be of no use to us, unless, as St *Paul* exhorted the *Colossians*, we walk worthy of the Lord, doing that which is well pleasing in his sight, and being fruitful in every good work. II. The prayers St *Paul* joins to these thanksgivings, teach us, that it is not enough to have arrived at some degree of truth and holiness, but that we ought to aim at perfection, and to beg of God that he would continually increase his knowledge, and the gifts of his spirit in us. These prayers of the apostle instruct us farther, that the purpose for which God grants us this knowledge and these gifts, is to frame our minds to holiness, to bring us to perfection and glory, by a continual increase of his grace.

We see in the second part of this chapter, that Christ is the creator of all things, that to know him is the most perfect and useful knowledge, and that by him God has been pleased to reconcile all men to himself. What we are to gather from hence is, that we are to seek for salvation in Christ Jesus alone, by continually persevering in faith and obedience to the gospel, and that no temptation whatever should be able to turn us away from it.

CHAP. II.

I. ST *Paul* testifies to the *Colossians*, that his fear lest they should suffer themselves to be drawn away by those who endeavoured to introduce the subtilties of philosophy, and the traditions of the Jews into the Christian religion, obliged him to make use of these exhortations. II. For this reason he continues to represent to them, that in Christ Jesus every thing was found that was necessary to justify and sanctify men; and consequently, that they ought not to give heed to philosophy, no more than to the ceremonies of the Jews, since they were useless, and had been abolished by the death of Christ. III. He concludes from thence, that Christians are no longer bound to observe these ceremonies, and that they ought not to listen to those who would confine them to a distinction of meats and days, and introduce the worship of angels, and several vain and superstitious practices.

REFLECTIONS.

THE great zeal St *Paul* shews at the beginning of this chapter for the *Colossians*, and his apprehensions of their being seduced by false teachers, proves,

proves, that the rulers of the church, and Christians in general, ought carefully to guard against error, and to beware that they be not diverted from the pure faith by subtilties, or doctrines invented by men. II. We see here, that the true way to prevent being seduced, is to adhere to Christ alone, and to his gospel, and to look upon him as one that has perfectly atoned for our sins; from whom alone all knowledge and holiness proceed, and who will undoubtedly save those who truly believe in him. III. It ought to be observed, that when St *Paul* says, that Christ has, by his death, taken away the obligation that was against us, and which consisted in the legal ordinances, having entirely abolished them, this only relates to circumcision, and the ceremonies which God had formerly prescribed to the Jews; but that he has not freed us from the obligation of keeping the commandments of God; that, on the contrary, he died to enable us to observe them the better, and to communicate his grace to us after a much more perfect manner than the *Mosaical* ceremonies were able to do. Lastly, We learn from this chapter, that it is a very dangerous thing to introduce into religion voluntary will-worship, and the inventions of men, and vain and superstitious customs, though they even carry with them some appearance of devotion; but that we should always confine ourselves to the gospel, and adhere to that true and solid piety which is there prescribed, and which consists in a pure faith, and in a renunciation of the world, and of the lusts of the flesh.

CHAP. III.

I. ST *Paul* shews, that faith in Christ raised from the dead, engages Christians to seek for the things

things of heaven, and to renounce those sins that were common among the Gentiles, and particularly uncleanness. II. He exhorts them next, to kindness, humility, mutual forgiveness, charity, peace, and to glorify God by their discourses, by their praises, and by their whole behaviour. III. He shews lastly, the duties of wives and husbands, of children and parents, of servants and masters.

REFLECTIONS.

IN this chapter St *Paul* shews, that those who truly believe that Christ is risen, and that he sits on the right hand of God, will not set their hearts upon worldly things, but turn their thoughts to heaven, and to that life which is prepared for us in Christ Jesus. II. The apostle informs us, that of the sins which Christianity obliges us to renounce, one, which particularly exposes men to the wrath of God, is impurity and all uncleanness, whether of thought, word, or deed; next he forbids all kind of wrath, calumny, unkind expressions, lying, and, in general, all the vices of the old man, that is, of corrupt nature. He points out the virtues and principal duties of the Christian life; which are, to abound in mercy, kindness, meekness, and humility; to bear with, and pardon one another, to have a sincere love for our neighbour, to edify one another by good discourses, to be continually rendering thanks to God our father, and so to behave ourselves, that all our words, and all our actions, may tend to his glory. III. To these general duties St *Paul* adds the particular ones, to which wives and husbands, children and parents, servants and masters, are mutually obliged; commanding wives to submit to their husbands, husbands to love their wives; children to obey their parents, and fathers to treat their children with mildness; servants

to obey their maſters, and be faithful to them, from a principal of conſcience, and maſters to be juſt and equitable to their ſervants. The repetition here made of theſe particular duties, which the apoſtle had before mentioned in the epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, is an argument of the great importance of them. Let us therefore obſerve theſe inviolably, and all the other precepts contained in this chapter; which are ſo juſt, and ſo worthy of the religion we profeſs: and diſcharge all the duties required of us, whether in our general calling, as Chriſtians, or in the particular ſtate and condition in which God has placed us.

CHAP. IV.

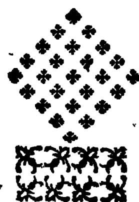
I. THE apoſtle exhorts the *Coloſſians* to perſevere in prayer, and to behave wiſely, and to ſpeak with prudence and meekneſs upon all occaſions. II. He recommends *Tychicus* and *Oneſimus*, whom he ſent to them; and concludes his epiſtle by ſalutations and ſome advices.

REFLECTIONS.

THE firſt duty which St *Paul* recommends in this chapter, is to pray continually; to perſevere in that holy exerciſe, and in thankſgivings; and, particularly, to pray for the miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, that they may preach the goſpel as it ought to be preached. II. The ſecond duty is, to be very prudent, and to redeem the time, eſpecially when we have to do with perſons who have an averſion to truth and holineſs; to ſpeak always with wiſdom and gentleneſs, and in ſuch a manner, as tends moſt to the edification of thoſe that hear us, and to avoid every

every thing that may expose us to danger, without necessity, or give offence to any one. Lastly, The good character St *Paul* gives of *Tychicus*, *Onesimus*, *Mark*, *Jesus*, *Epaphras*, and St *Luke*, who were all of them excellent servants of God, and the manner in which he recommends them to the *Colossians*, should convince all Christians; that good ministers, who behave worthy of their office, are a very valuable blessing; and that we ought to love them sincerely, and that they should be received by the church with all kind of respect and affection, as they, on their part, ought to grow more and more zealous, and take heed of the administration which they have received of the Lord, that they may faithfully discharge it.

The End of the Epistle of St PAUL *to the* COLOSSIANS.



THE

THE

FIRST EPISTLE of St PAUL

TO TH

THESSALONIANS.

ARGUMENT.

This epistle, which is the oldest of St Paul's *epistles, was wrote in the fifty first year of Christ. In the three first chapters, the apostle expresses his great joy to hear of the happy state of the* Thessalonians, *and their steadiness in persecutions. He likewise informs them what had happened to him, what sentiments he had had, and what he still had for them. In the two last he exhorts them to piety and holiness.*

CHAP. I.

ST *Paul* praises God, I. That the *Thessalonians* had received the gospel which he had preached to them with faith and zeal. And, II. That their church was a pattern to all the churches of *Macedonia* and *Achaia*.

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

IT is to be obſerved in general, on this epiſtle, that there is no church which St *Paul* ſpeaks ſo advantageouſly of, and commends ſo much, as the church of *Theſſalonica*. At the entrance of the epiſtle he expreſſes the greateſt joy, and renders moſt hearty thanks to God for the happy ſtate of the *Theſſalonians*; calling to remembrance the manner in which they received his preaching, their faith, charity and patience; which ſhews, that the glory of any church, and what affords the greateſt joy and comfort to the faithful ſervants of God, is to ſee the goſpel bring forth fruit, and faith and every virtue flouriſh and abound in it. The church of *Theſſalonica*, which was formerly an example in this reſpect to the reſt, may be ſtill propoſed for a pattern to all Chriſtian churches. We ſhould likewiſe apply to ourſelves what St *Paul* ſaid to the *Theſſalonians*, touching their converſion to the Chriſtian religion; ſince, like them, we alſo, through the mercy of God, have been delivered from the darkneſs of heatheniſm, and *are turned from idols, to ſerve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raiſed from the dead, even JESUS, which delivers us from the wrath to come.*

CHAP. II.

ST *Paul* does three things in this chapter. I. He puts the *Theſſalonians* in mind, that he had preached the goſpel to them with ſincerity, and without any view of intereſt; and, that he might not be burdenſome to them, he had ſupported himſelf by his own labour; and that he had always exhorted them to live to the honour of that God, who

had called them to his glory. II. He blesses God, that his ministry had been effectual among them, and that they had endured, with so much constancy, the persecutions which at that time were every where raised against the Christians by the Jews, whose hatred he himself had experienced during his stay at *Thessalonica*, finding them the bitterest enemies of the gospel. III. He shews the desire he had to see the *Thessalonians*, and his ardent affection towards them.

Reflections.

I. THE ministers of the gospel should learn by St *Paul's* example, to exercise their office with integrity; to preach the pure word of God without any motives of interest or vainglory; to make appear in all their actions, an entire disinterestedness, and a perfect meekness; to behave themselves piously and without reproach, and continually to exhort Christians to a conduct worthy of God, who calls them to his kingdom and to his glory. II. We see in this chapter, that the duty of those to whom the pure word of God is preached, is to receive it as the *Thessalonians* did, not as the word of man, but as the word of God, and not to be discouraged at the opposition and the persecutions which they might be exposed to; but to bear them with the same constancy as St *Paul* and the *Thessalonians* endured those which the Jews raised against them. III. St *Paul* complains, that the Jews were the avowed enemies of the gospel, that they prevented, as much as they could, its progress among the heathens, and that by this means they filled up the measure of their iniquities, and drew down the divine vengeance more and more upon them. We have great reason to deplore the obstinacy of the Jews, who continue to this day in the same infidelity, feeling the effects of God's

wrath,

wrath, and to pray for their conversion. We see moreover that there have been in all times persons that oppose Christ's kingdom, and therefore we must not be surprised, if we find the like among Christians. Lastly, We see in this chapter, the most extraordinary and most affecting marks of St *Paul's* love and esteem for the *Thessalonians*. Pastors, who are animated with the same spirit as this holy apostle, have the most tender affection for those committed to their charge; there is no joy comparable to that which they feel when they see the fruit of their ministry; and as the faithful are all their hope, and all their joy in this world, they will also be their crown of glory at the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

CHAP. III.

THE apostle speaks in this chapter, I. Of the care he took to send *Timothy* from *Athens* to *Thessalonica*, to be informed of the condition of the *Thessalonians*, and to strengthen them. II. Of the great comfort he received when *Timothy*, at his return, brought him the good news of their remembrance of him, and their perseverance in the faith; on which occasion he prays very earnestly for them.

REFLECTIONS.

I. WHAT is chiefly to be observed here, is, that St *Paul*, in his great love for the *Thessalonians*, was not easy till he had sent *Timothy* to know how they did, and to confirm them in the faith. This behaviour of St *Paul*, shews the great concern true pastors have for their flocks. Their love for the Lord Jesus, and for those who hear his voice, makes them be continually employed in the supply of their wants, and in providing for their edification

by all possible means. II. The extraordinary comfort St *Paul* felt, at being informed by *Timothy* of the perseverance and happy state of the *Thessalonians*, and the thanks he renders to God on this account, are expressed in such strong terms, as denote the most lively sense of joy, tenderness and esteem. This apostle assures them, he could not sufficiently bless the Lord, for that excess of joy he felt when he thought on them. Nothing more sensibly affects the faithful servants of Jesus Christ, nor gives them greater pleasure, than when they see the faith and piety of those over whom God has appointed them; this being always the principal subject of their prayers and thanksgivings. All Christians should have the same sentiments, and labour for the same end, with their utmost zeal, for the consolation of their spiritual guides, as well as for the glory of God and their own salvation. This is expressed in this prayer of St *Paul*: *The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.*

CHAP. IV.

THERE are two things to be observed in this chapter: I. Exhortations to a holy life, and especially to chastity and charity. II. St *Paul* shews, that Christians ought not to grieve excessively for the dead; and, in this view, he speaks of what shall happen both to the dead and those which shall be alive at the last day, and how they shall be taken up into heaven.

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS.

ST *Paul* teaches us in this chapter, I. That the chief duty of Christians is, to behave themselves in ſuch a manner as is agreeable to God; to keep the commandments we have received from the Lord, and to abound more and more in piety. II. St *Paul*, as uſual, warns the *Theſſalonians* in very clear and ſtrong terms againſt impurity, becauſe this vice was very common among the heathens, eſpecially in great cities, ſuch as *Theſſalonica*. He ſays, that the will of God is, that we ſhould be holy; that we ſhould avoid impurity and evil concupiſcence; that every one ſhould know how to keep his body in chaſtity; that no body ought to violate the rules of modeſty, of charity, and of juſtice, to gratify the inordinate deſires of the fleſh; and, that God is the avenger of thoſe ſins, ſince he has not called us to uncleanneſs, but to holineſs. III. St *Paul* teaches us two things concerning charity; one is, that true Chriſtians do not need to be exhorted to charity, ſince they are taught by God to love one another, and to aſſiſt their brethren; and the other, that in order to exerciſe charity, every one ought to keep within the bounds of his calling, to apply himſelf to his own buſineſs, and to avoid idleneſs and curioſity, which is a way of life inconſiſtent with piety and chriſtianity. Laſtly, We ſee in this chapter, that we ought not to afflict ourſelves for the dead, *as men without hope*, ſince we know that thoſe who die in the Lord, ſhall riſe again, and be carried up into heaven upon the clouds to meet the Lord, together with thoſe who ſhall be then alive. This doctrine ought to comfort us for the death of ſuch perſons as are dear to us, when we have reaſon to believe them in the number of the faithful; to confirm

ourſelves againſt the fear of death, and to excite us to live to the Lord, to the end, that dying likewiſe in him, we may be raiſed again one day, to be eternally united to him in the heavenly glory.

CHAP. V.

I. ST *Paul* having, at the end of the preceeding chapter, ſpoke of Chriſt's coming, ſays, that the time of his coming was unknown and uncertain; and exhorts Chriſtians to prepare themſelves for it by ſobriety and watchfulneſs. II. He preſcribes to the *Theſſalonians* ſeveral duties of piety. III. He concludes his epiſtle, by praying God for their ſanctification, and recommending himſelf to their prayers.

Reflections.

THIS chapter teaches us, I. That the day of the Lord will come in a very ſudden manner, ſurpriſing men when they leaſt expect it; that it will be a day of terror for thoſe who walk in darkneſs, and give themſelves up to the works of the fleſh; but that that day will be full of comfort to believers; and that therefore the way not to be ſurpriſed by it, is to prepare ourſelves for it by a ſober and mortified life, by faith, by the practice of charity, and all kind of good works. St *Paul* next preſcribes ſeveral particular duties, ſuch as, firſt, the edifying and exhorting one another by good diſcourſes. II. He ſpeaks in the ſtrongeſt terms of the reſpect and love due to the paſtors and governors of the church, for their work's ſake. III. He commands us to live in peace one with another; adviſing, comforting, and forbearing each other; and avoiding revenge. He adds

adds ſeveral ſentences, which are ſo many excellent precepts; ſuch as to rejoice always with ſpiritual joy; to pray continually; to give thanks to God in all things; not to quench the gifts of the ſpirit, either in others, or in ourſelves; to try all things, and hold faſt that which is good; and, to avoid all appearance of evil. Theſe are ſo many holy rules which we ſhould never loſe ſight of, and which we ſhould endeavour to put in practice; adding always prayer to our endeavours, and with St *Paul*, beſeeching God *to ſanctiſy intirely our whole ſpirit, and ſoul, and body, and preſerve them blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Amen.

The End of the Firſt Epiſtle of St PAUL *to the* THESSALONIANS.

THE

SECOND EPISTLE of St PAUL

TO THE

THESSALONIANS.

ARGUMENT.

This epistle was wrote a little after the former, about the year of Christ fifty two. It consists of three chapters. In the first, St Paul *encourages the* Thessalonians *against Persecution. In the second, He corrects their notions concerning the approach of the last day. And in the third, He exhorts them to live according to the purity of the gospel.*

CHAP. I.

I. ST *Paul* gives thanks to God, that the faith and charity of the *Thessalonians* increased more and more, and that they persevered in the midst of the persecutions they suffered. II. He assures them, that God would not fail to punish persecutors, and those who did not obey the gospel, and that he would crown the faithful with everlasting glory at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. III. He beseeches God to confirm the *Thessalonians*, and to make them increase in faith and holiness.

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

I. WE see in this epistle, that the church of *Thessalonica*, which St *Paul* had so much commended in the former epistle, did more and more abound in faith, charity, and the gifts of the holy Ghost; that St *Paul's* affection for this church was continually encreasing, and was the subject of his joy and thanksgivings. It is the great glory of the church to be continually improving, and the greatest satisfaction to its ministers to be able to say of the people committed to their charge, what St *Paul* testifies of the faithful of *Thessalonica*. II. This chapter teaches us, that Christians, far from being discouraged by those afflictions to which the profession of the gospel exposes them, are thereby better qualified to enter into the kingdom of God; that such afflictions are a proof of his righteous judgment, and that the Lord will come to give rest and ease to such as have been exposed to them; and to exercise vengeance against persecutors, and all those who obey not the gospel of Christ. This doctrine ought to produce in us patience, and even joy in our afflictions; a lively sense and dread of the judgment of God, and a constant endeavour to please him. The prayer St *Paul* makes for the confirmation of the *Thessalonians* in faith and the grace of God, shews that we must persevere in goodness, and aim more and more at perfection. This should be our chief care and the subject of our prayers, as St *Paul* exhorts us in the following words: *We pray always for you, that our God would render you worthy of his calling, and fulfil in you all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified by you, and you by him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.* Amen.

CHAP. II.

I. ST *Paul*, that he might undeceive the *Thessalonians*, in the opinion some had entertained, that the day of the Lord which he had been speaking of would soon come, foretels, that before the coming of that day, there would be an apostasy in the church, occasioned by the man of sin, and the son of perdition. II. He describes his characters, the place, the time, the manner of his manifestation, the progress he would make, and lastly, his destruction. The apostle adds exhortations and prayers in behalf of the *Thessalonians*.

Reflections.

THE prophesy contained in this chapter is very remarkable, but somewhat obscure. St *Paul* foretels that there would happen an almost general defection in the church, before the day of the Lord should come. It has been generally believed, that this prophesy foretold the coming of Antichrist; but it is difficult to explain all the circumstances of this prophesy. It is naturally enough applied to what happened some time after the death of the apostles; when ignorance, error, corruption, tyranny, and all superstitions and disorders of every kind, were introduced into the church, and reigned therein for several ages: but this prophesy does likewise shew, that this apostasy and extreme corruption should not last always, and that the Lord would put an end to it, by his infinite power. God was pleased that this event should be foretold, that we should not be surprised at it, and the faithful should be upon their guard. It must likewise be observed, after St *Paul*, that if there have been and still are some people, who have suffered themselves to be led away by error, it

is

is the just judgment of God, because they did not love the truth, and because they took pleasure in vice; but those whom God has enlightned with the pure light of the gospel, ought *to give him thanks, because he has from the beginning chosen them to salvation, and the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ; standing fast in the doctrine they have received, and praying the Lord to sanctify them entirely, and to establish them in every good word and work.*

CHAP. III.

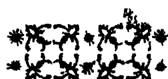
I. ST *Paul* exhorts the *Thessalonians* to pray for him, and for the progress of the gospel; and he also prays for them. II. He orders them to withdraw from those who lead a wicked life, and to have no communication with them; and he blames those particularly that lived in idleness. III. He concludes his epistle with prayers for the faithful of *Thessalonica*.

REFLECTIONS.

THERE are three principal reflections to be made on this chapter. I. The first is, that zeal for the glory of God obliges all Christians to pray for the propagation of the gospel, and for those faithful ministers that preach it; who, on their part, ought likewise to pray for the church and all its members. II. The second is, that if there be any in the church, who lead a disorderly life, and do not behave themselves according to the commands of our Saviour, we ought not to consider them as our brethren, but withdraw ourselves from them. This is what St *Paul* expresly orders in the name of Christ, and what is enjoined in several places of the New Testament. Whereby it appears, that discipline should be ex-

ercifed; that fcandalous finners ought not to be efteemed members of the church; and that Chriftians fhould avoid all intercourfe with them. III. It is to be obferved, that the apoftle particularly condemns thofe who, inftead of employing themfelves, and labouring in an honeft calling, fpend their lives in idlenefs, in curiofity, and frivolous engagements. It appears from what St *Paul* fays on this head, that this kind of life, generally very common in cities, and which the world looks upon as innocent, is utterly unworthy of Chriftians; and that thofe who follow it do not deferve even to live, fince the apoftle has exprefsly declared, *that if any would not work, neither fhould he eat.*

The End of the Second Epiftle of St PAUL *to the* THESSALONIANS.



THE

THE

FIRST EPISTLE of St PAUL

TO

TIMOTHY.

ARGUMENT.

St Paul *is thought to have writ this epistle in the year of our Lord sixty four, to* Timothy, *whom he had left at* Ephesus, *to take care of the church in that city. His design was to exhort* Timothy *to oppose the false teachers; and to instruct him how bishops and pastors ought to govern the church of God.*

CHAP. I.

I. IN this chapter, the apostle orders *Timothy* to hinder certain Jewish doctors from corrupting the doctrine of Christ, by subtle, profane, and extravagant notions, and introducing disputes in the church. II. And because these doctors shewed great zeal for the law, he informs him what is the true use of the law. III. This gives him occasion to speak of the goodness of God in calling him to the office of an apostle, and in general, of the mercy of God towards sinners. IV. And lastly, he exhorts *Timothy* to discharge the duties of his function with courage, and to oppose false teachers.

REFLEC-

Reflections *after reading the chapter.*

THE instructions contained in this chapter are the following. I. That the duty of ministers is, to teach and preserve sound doctrine, and to oppose such as would alter it, by teaching false or vain doctrines, and such as are only fit to raise disputes and troubles in the church. II. That *the end of the commandment is charity*, such as proceeds *out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned*; and that those who turn aside from this end, lose themselves in useless discourses. By this rule we may judge whether the doctrines preached are true, and whether we ourselves are in the number of true and sincere Christians. III. That the law, considered as prohibiting the grossest crimes, was not so properly given to good men; who abhor those crimes: from whence it follows, that though it be not abolished, there is no longer the same use for it, in respect to Christians, as formerly; since the gospel trains men up to the most perfect holiness, and to obey God from a principle of love. IV. St *Paul* teaches us here, *that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*, which he confirms by his own example. This is a doctrine full of comfort for those sinners that are truly penitent. But what St *Paul* says here, well deserves our notice, namely, that God had shewn him mercy, because in persecuting the church, and blaspheming the name of Jesus Christ, he had done it through ignorance and unbelief. We may learn from hence, that it is more easy to obtain pardon for those sins that are committed through ignorance, than those that are committed wilfully, and contrary to the knowledge we have of the will of God. Lastly, We see in this chapter, that our chief care ought to be, to have a good

good conſcience; ſince in loſing that we loſe the faith, and fall into the utmoſt obdurateneſs.

CHAP. II.

I. THE apoſtle directs that prayer ſhould be made in the church for all men, and particularly for kings and magiſtrates, though at that time they were heathens; and he founds this order upon the will of God, who would have all men to be ſaved; and that it was for that purpoſe he ſent his Son into the world, and cauſed the goſpel to be preached. II. He ſays, that men ought to pray in a ſpirit of peace and purity; and that women ſhould be preſent at the aſſemblies of the church in modeſt apparel, and continue in reſpect and ſilence.

REFLECTIONS.

FROM this chapter we learn, I. That it is a very neceſſary duty in religion, to make public prayers for the ſalvation of all men, and particularly for kings, and thoſe that are in authority. And therefore that theſe prayers are an eſſential part of the Chriſtian worſhip. II. That the goodneſs of God towards men is ſo great, that he deſires that all ſhould be ſaved; for which end, he has given his Son Chriſt Jeſus to be a mediator between God and men. This likewiſe obliges us to deſire the ſalvation of all men, to love, and to pray for them. III. That no prayers can be acceptable to God, that do not proceed from a pure heart, and from a ſpirit of charity and peace, free from wrath and litigiouſneſs. Beſides this, the apoſtle gives Chriſtian women three inſtructions: the firſt is, to be clothed decently and modeſtly, as it becomes women that profeſs to ſerve God; to ſhun immodeſty, and exceſs of ornaments; and to obſerve theſe rules chiefly when they attend the religious aſſemblies.

assemblies. The second is, to remain in silence and submission to their husbands at home, as well as in the church. And the third, that they shall be saved, if they take care of the children they bring into the world; if they educate them in piety; and if they themselves continue in faith, charity, holiness and modesty.

CHAP. III.

ST *Paul* speaks in this chapter, I. Of the importance of the office of a bishop and pastor, and of the qualities which those ought to have who are admitted into this office. II. Of the office of deacons, whose business it was to distribute the alms of the church, and to assist the bishops in their office; and he shews likewise how deacons ought to be qualified. III. To engage *Timothy* to admit none into any ecclesiastical employ but those who were worthy of it, and to govern the church as he ought, he represents to him the dignity of the church of God, and the excellency of the doctrine taught therein.

REFLECTIONS.

I. WHAT St *Paul* says of the excellency of the office of a bishop, and of the qualifications that are required in such as aspire to or exercise that office, shews, that it is of divine institution, and of the highest importance. This is what pastors ought most seriously to consider, that they may render themselves worthy of so holy a function; not only by avoiding all those faults that might render their ministry unfruitful, and living in such a manner, as to give no just occasion of reproach; but moreover, by an edifying behaviour, and by giving an example of all kind of virtues. II. From the rules here prescribed by St *Paul*, it appears that it is not right to

to admit into holy orders any but perſons of an unblameable character, and ſuch as are able to teach, and govern the church of God. III. All Chriſtians are to conſider, that ſince this office is of ſo great conſequence, and the ſalvation of ſouls and the glory of God depend on it, the character of paſtors ſhould be eſteemed venerable and ſacred in the church; and thoſe who are inveſted with it, and behave worthy of it, ought to be had in reverence. As for deacons, it appears from this chapter, that their order, which was eſtabliſhed ſoon after our Lord's aſcenſion, was preſerved in all churches, as well as that of biſhops; and beſides the great uſe of thoſe offices in which the deacons were employed, this order was of great ſervice in forming good paſtors; the apoſtle having eſtabliſhed a ſubordination, and appointed that no one ſhould be raiſed to the office of biſhop but by degrees; and that the biſhops ſhould be taken from among the deacons, who had faithfully diſcharged that office. By this means none were placed at the head of the church, but perſons well known, and of a ſufficient age and experience. It is a great misfortune that this excellent order and ſubordination is not obſerved in all churches. Laſtly, What the apoſtle ſays of the dignity of the church of the living God, and of the excellency of the doctrine taught therein, ought to be ſeriouſly conſidered, as well by thoſe that govern the church as by all the faithful; that ſo both one and the other may be thereby ſtirred up to reverence the church of Chriſt, and to remain inviolably attached to it, and to diſcharge their duty, every one according to his condition and calling,

CHAP. IV.

I. THE apostle warns *Timothy* that there would appear false teachers, who would condemn marriage, and the use of certain meats. II. He exhorts him to teach pure doctrine, and to adhere to true piety, the great advantage of which he represents to him. III. He recommends to him, so to behave as to procure respect to his ministry, notwithstanding his youth, and apply himself diligently to all his duties.

REFLECTIONS.

THAT we may improve by this chapter, we must observe, I. That, according to the prediction of St *Paul*, there did arise false teachers, who forbad marriage, and the use of meats, and introduced many other errors in religion, not only in the primitive church, but likewise in the following ages. This should convince us how important it is to avoid error and superstition, and never to depart from the doctrine of the gospel; but it must likewise be remembered, that what St *Paul* here says, does by no means authorize libertinism and sensuality; and that God's creatures must be used with moderation and with thanksgiving. II. As the impostors St *Paul* speaks of were carnal men, whose aim was to grow rich and enjoy the conveniencies of life, and who made religion subservient to their interests; St *Paul* assures *Timothy*, that true piety is the most profitable thing in the world, *having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come*; and that God, who takes care of all men, does particularly provide for his faithful servants. This is an undoubted truth, and teaches us, that the only way to be happy in this

this life, and in that which is to come, is the practice of solid piety. III. St *Paul* shews in this chapter that it is the duty of the ministers of the gospel, to preach pure doctrine; to be always exercised in godliness; to behave in such a manner as none may have any reason to despise them; to be patterns of faith, holiness, purity, and all kind of virtues, both in their words and in their actions; to cultivate their gifts by labour and study, and by a diligent application to the functions of their office, so that all the world may be witness of their progress, and *that they may save themselves, and those who hear them.* These lessons of instruction, as they first regard pastors, and demand their most serious attention; so they should engage all Christians to make a good use of the ministry of their spiritual guides, and to beseech God that he would sanctify those who exercise this holy office, that they may discharge all these duties to the glory of God, and to the edification of his church.

CHAP. V.

I. ST *Paul* directs *Timothy* how to conduct himself in reproving and admonishing, and in receiving widows that were maintained at the expence of the church, and who served in several charitable employments; upon which occasion he shews the duty of women, and the faults they are to avoid. II. He speaks next of the duty of honouring and maintaining pastors, and what rules are to be observed when they were accused, or when any one was to be ordained to that office.

REFLECTIONS.

I. WHAT is said in this chapter, is a lesson to the pastors of the church, to dispense their

their exhortations with prudence, suiting them to the persons to whom they are addressed, and to behave in every respect with discretion, uprightness and integrity. II. The rules which St *Paul* prescribes concerning widows who were in the service of the church, shew that every thing should be done with order in the church of Christ, particularly works of charity; that the distribution of alms, and the care of holy things, should be committed to none but persons of gravity and piety; and that those who can assist their poor relations, are under an obligation to do it. III. We see here, that aged women ought to apply themselves to works of piety and charity, and to give young women good instructions, and set them good examples: that to be idle, busy bodies, tattlers, and to gad from house to house, is a life unworthy of christian women, whom God requires to be discreet, modest, chaste and retired, and to take care of their families. IV. The order St *Paul* gives *Timothy*, to reprove publickly those that sin, confirms the necessity of church-discipline and publick censures. Lastly, We may gather from this whole chapter, that the ministry is a very important office; that it requires a great deal of prudence, knowledge, and integrity; that therefore we ought to be very circumspect and deliberate in admitting persons to so a holy a ministry; as on the other hand we should not lightly accuse or condemn those who exercise it.

CHAP. VI.

MEntion is made in this chapter, I. Of the duties of servants towards their masters: II. Of false teachers, who taught a different doctrine from that of St *Paul*, and of the mischief they caused in the church, by raising disputes in it. III. And because

becaufe thefe falfe teachers acted only with a view to their intereft, St *Paul* fpeaks of content of mind, and of the evils that proceed from the love of riches. IV. He calls upon *Timothy* with great earneftnefs to obferve all he had directed him, to preferve purity of doctrine, and to fhun vain difputes.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THE care St *Paul* takes to fet forth the duty of fervants, after that of paftors, fhews, that God defires the falvation of all, and that he has no refpect to the difference of mens condition. This fhews likewife, that fervants ought to be faithful, and in fubjection to their mafters, and to confider, that if in the time of St *Paul*, the flaves, whofe mafters were heathens, were obliged to this duty, thofe who ferve Chriftian mafters are under a much ftricter obligation. II. We fhould ferioufly reflect upon what is here faid about nice and ufelefs queftions and difputes, and againft thofe who give way to them, whom the apoftle defcribes as full of pride, men of corrupt hearts, who occafioned mifchiefs innumerable in the church. This fhould infpire teachers, and all Chriftians, with an extreme averfion to difputes of this kind; and engage them, as St *Paul* advifes, to avoid thofe who raife them, and thofe who encourage them. III. A third inftruction contained in this chapter is, *That godlinefs with contentment is great gain: That we brought nothing into this world, and that it is certain we can carry nothing out: That having food and raiment, we ought to be therewith content.* This is a leffon of great importance, and tends very much to produce tranquillity of mind, and to fecure us from thofe temptations which a neglect of this rule expofes us to. IV. The apoftle confirms this leffon by reminding us, *That the love of money is the root of all evil; that*

they that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. This is a truth which is taught us by the word of God, and confirmed by every day's experience. Let us never forget this lesson; let us always remember these excellent and wholesome instructions. V. St. *Paul* exhorts those who have worldly goods, not to be proud, not to trust in uncertain riches, but to be rich in good works, that they may lay up treasure for the time to come, and obtain everlasting life. These are duties which the gospel requires of all Christians who have this world's goods, which they ought never to forget. Lastly, The grave and solemn manner in which St *Paul* requires *Timothy* to fulfil all the duties of his office, and to keep faithfully that which was committed to his care, should engage all those that exercise the holy ministry to redouble their zeal, and to acquit themselves of their duty with such fidelity, that *having fought the good fight of faith, they may lay hold on eternal life, and be without rebuke until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*; who in due time shall be manifested to be *the blessed and only potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords: who only hath immortality; dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting.* Amen.

The End of the first Epistle of St PAUL *to* TIMOTHY.

THE

THE

SECOND EPISTLE of St PAUL

TO

TIMOTHY.

ARGUMENT.

The apostle St Paul *writ this epistle in the year of Christ sixty-six, whilst he was the second time prisoner at* Rome, *and a little before he suffered martyrdom. In this epistle he renews the exhortations he had before addressed to* Timothy, *charging him faithfully to discharge with still greater zeal the duties of his office.*

CHAP. I.

I. IN this chapter St *Paul* expresses his tender affection to *Timothy*, whose faith and godliness he commends. II. He exhorts him to double his zeal, and not to be discouraged by the afflictions to which the faithful, and especially the ministers of the gospel, were exposed; and always to retain the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ. III. He complains of those that had forsaken him, and

prays

prays to God for the family of *Onesiphorus*, which took care of him when he was a prisoner at *Rome*.

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

ST *Paul's* commendation, at the beginning of this epistle, of the piety which *Timothy* had shewn, even from his youth, and in which he was educated by his mother and grandmother, is a proof of the great happiness of a Christian education; and that those parents who inspire their children with holiness, do bestow upon them the greatest of all blessings. But St *Paul's* exhortations to *Timothy*, to stir up more and more the gift of God which was in him, and to persevere in the faith, do likewise shew, that those who have been religiously educated, and have made a happy beginning, ought carefully to preserve that heavenly gift, endeavour to increase it, and make a constant profession of piety, without ever being ashamed of it, or without being discouraged by the opposition they meet with. All Christians ought to consider these things, but it does, in a more particular manner, concern the ministers of the gospel: and the example of *Timothy* teaches us, that it is a most valuable blessing to the church, when God sets over it pastors, who, like *Timothy*, have lived in piety from their youth, and whose zeal is always increasing. Lastly, The prayers which the apostle makes for *Onesiphorus*, who had not forsaken him, like others, but had comforted him in his imprisonment, shew, that it is a work very acceptable to God to relieve the afflicted, and especially such as suffer for the gospel; and that those who have done it will receive their reward, and find mercy from the Lord at the last day.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

I. ST *Paul* exhorts *Timothy* to undergo with courage the troubles that attended the exercise of his office. II. He recommends to him, to preach the pure word of God, and to oppose idle and profane disputes, which he represents the pernicious consequences of, by comparing them to a gangrene, which spreads more and more, and by shewing that they were likely to engage men in fatal errors, as it happened to certain false teachers of that time, who denied the resurrection. III. The apostle adds, that nevertheless there were always some faithful teachers and Christians, that kept themselves free from these errors; and that the character which they are known by, is their abstaining from sin. IV. And lastly, He orders *Timothy* to avoid youthful lusts, to restrain disputes, and labour to bring back those that were fallen into error.

REFLECTIONS.

WHAT is contained in this chapter directly concerns the ministers of the gospel. They may here see, that their office calls them to serve Christ faithfully, and to this end to devote themselves to him entirely, without engaging in the business of this life; to bear the fatigue attending their office; to promote the edification of the church; to banish error and disputes; and to cause truth, piety, and concord to reign in it; to preserve peace with all those who call upon the Lord with a pure heart; and lastly, to endeavour with zeal, meekness, and patience, to recover those that are engaged in error or vice. Besides these reflections, which concern the rulers of the church in particular, we should make these three general remarks; first, that the

character

character of Christians which we bear, and the vow we made of renouncing the world, in order to devote ourselves to the service of Christ, calls upon us to renounce every thing that may hinder us from being faithful to him; and obliges us to do and to suffer every thing for the love of him; remembering, that *if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: If we deny him, he will also deny us.* Secondly, We see, moreover, in this chapter, that it is dangerous to hearken to those who disturb the peace of the church, and spread errors therein; and that therefore every one ought to be upon his guard, and never depart from the doctrine which is taught in the word of God, and to be always animated with a spirit of unity and peace. Lastly, All Christians should carefully remember these words of St *Paul*, which contain at one view the substance of religion, *viz.* That *the Lord knoweth them that are his*, that the token by which he knows them is, that they *depart from iniquity*; that in the church there are vessels of honour and vessels of dishonour; that is to say, there are good and bad men; and that *if a man purge himself from sin, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

CHAP. III.

I. ST *Paul* foretels that great corruption would creep into the church, by the means of false teachers and persons who would corrupt the doctrine and practice of Christianity. II. He exhorts *Timothy* to shun such people, whose destruction he foretels; to imitate his conduct and patience under afflictions, and chiefly to adhere to the doctrine contained in the holy scriptures, the divine authority and usefulness of which he confirms.

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS.

I. THE prophecy which we read in this chapter, and which ſhews that in the latter days there would be perilous times, is very remarkable. It was fulfilled during the lives of the apoſtles, and in the ſucceeding ages; ſince ſeveral dangerous ſects ſprung up, who, together with damnable errors, introduced impiety and licentiouſneſs. This prophecy extends even to this time, ſince we ſee ſo many Chriſtians, who have nothing but the form of godlineſs, denying the power thereof, being engaged in wickedneſs and diſorders of every kind. Since this great corruption was foretold, we ſhould not be ſtaggered at it; on the contrary, we ought to be thereby the more confirmed in the truth. God has thought fit to warn us of it, that we may not ſuffer ourſelves to be drawn away by evil examples; but that following the exhortation of St *Paul*, we ſhould reſiſt ſin, and flee from thoſe that are guilty of it. This is the duty of all Chriſtians, and particularly of the miniſters of the goſpel. II. This chapter teaches us, that if whilſt we do our duty, by withſtanding vice and impiety, we ſhould be expoſed to the contradiction of ſinners, there is nothing more will befal us than what formerly happened to *Moſes*, to St *Paul*, and moſt of the ſaints; becauſe, as St *Paul* obſerves on this occaſion, *thoſe that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer perſecution.* But this ſhould be ſo far from diſcouraging us, that it ought to animate us the more in the diſcharge of our duty. Laſtly, The apoſtle teaches us, that the way to ſecure ourſelves and others from ſin and error, is never to depart from the holy ſcriptures, which alone are able to make us wiſe unto ſalvation, through faith in Chriſt Jeſus. And thoſe who are called into the church to guide and inſtruct others,

others, ſhould take notice that it was by reading and meditating on theſe divine books, that *Timothy* became ſo excellent a miniſter of Chriſt; and in them they will find, as St *Paul* ſays, every thing neceſſary to qualify them for the diſcharge of their holy office.

CHAP. IV.

I. ST *Paul* continues to exhort *Timothy* with great earneſtneſs to diſcharge all the duties of his office. And, II. That he may the more effectually engage him thereto, he tells him his death was drawing near; for which he expreſſes great joy, and a firm hope of the glory of heaven. III. He orders *Timothy* to come and ſee him as ſoon as poſſible, complains of thoſe who had forſaken him, and concludes this epiſtle with ſalutations and affectionate wiſhes.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THOSE whom God calls to the holy miniſtry, have, in this chapter, powerful motives to diſcharge all the parts of their duty, and eſpecially to preach the word of God, to reprove, and in all ſeaſons to exhort with zeal, with evidence, and with meekneſs. This they are engaged to do by thoſe grave admonitions which St *Paul* addreſſes to *Timothy*, charging him before God, and from the conſideration of the laſt judgment, to redouble his zeal and watchfulneſs. II. St *Paul* here informs the miniſters of the goſpel, that times of danger often come, when men diſlike the purity and ſimplicity of the Chriſtian doctrine, cannot bear the truth, and love to hear ſuch doctrines as flatter their curioſity, and eſpecially their paſſions. Which ſhews, that thoſe who are called to inſtruct others, have

need of the utmost prudence and fidelity to discharge the duties of their office in a proper manner, and with good success. III. The joy and confidence which this apostle shewed at the time he was going to suffer martyrdom, is a proof to us of the great courage and constancy wherewith those that have served God faithfully are animated when their death draws near. And since St *Paul* declares, that the crown of righteousness was reserved not only for him, but likewise for all those who love the appearance of their Lord and Saviour; we ought always to imitate this apostle in the zeal and love which he testified for Christ; we out to fight the good fight, to finish our course, and to keep the faith, even to the end. IV. The complaints St *Paul* makes against those who had forsaken him, and those who had used him ill, shew, that there have been at all times some who have opposed the faithful servants of God; and that even in the bosom of the church there are worldly men, who love the present world better than Christ; as also fearful and cowardly persons, that durst not make an open profession of piety, nor stand by those who maintain it. Lastly, We see by what St *Paul* here says of what happened to him at *Rome*, that though the faithful are without support in respect to the world, yet that God never forsakes them in trials and in dangers, but that he strengthens them, and after having delivered them from all evil, he will save them in his heavenly kingdom.

The End of the second Epistle of St PAUL *to* TIMOTHY.

THE

EPISTLE of St PAUL

TO

TITUS.

ARGUMENT.

It is thought St Paul *writ this epistle about the year of Christ sixty-four, to* Titus, *whom he had left in the island of* Crete, *now called* Candia, *to take care of the churches that were there.*

CHAP. I.

THIS chapter has two parts. I. St *Paul* orders *Titus* to appoint pastors in all the churches of the island of *Crete*, and describes the qualities with which they ought to be endowed. II. He speaks of certain Jewish doctors that added many trifling questions and fables to the doctrines of the gospel, particularly with regard to the use of meats; and who were besides this of a vicious disposition, like most of the inhabitants of the isle of *Crete*.

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

SINCE St *Paul* directs *Titus* to regulate all things in the churches of *Crete*, and particularly to settle pastors there, it appears from hence, that it is the will of God that order should be observed in the church; and particularly, that in every place where there are Christians, there should be pastors, their office being of divine institution, and of absolute necessity; but the great precaution which he advises him to use in the choice of those ministers he was to appoint, proves, that that sacred employment ought to be intrusted to none but persons without reproach, and of an exemplary life, and who have withal the necessary gifts to teach, and preserve the purity of the evangelical doctrine against such as would corrupt it. We see, besides, that it is the duty of the ministers of Christ to set themselves against false teachers, and such as might seduce Christians, and engage them in error or in sin. The apostle's reflection upon the vicious dispositions of the inhabitants of the isle of *Crete*, whom he represents as addicted to lying, wickedness, sloth, and sensuality, shews, that it is very difficult for such as have an evil heart, and vicious inclinations, to become true disciples of Christ; but that, however, the servants of God ought to neglect nothing to bring them to the faith. Lastly, We ought seriously to reflect upon the description the apostle here makes of the false teachers and wicked Christians he is there speaking of; saying, *They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him; being abominable, disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.* These words are an exact representation of many false Christians, who live in the communion of the church; and teach us, that the profession of religion and faith in God do

do not avail thofe that live in difobedience; and, as they renounce God by their works, he will not own them for his.

CHAP. XVI.

ST *Paul* does two things in this chapter: I. He fets forth the duties of old men and women; of young men and fervants; and charges *Titus*, to be himfelf to all thefe, and efpecially to young people, an example of wifdom and virtue. II. He gives us here an excellent abridgment of the Chriftian doctrine, and fhews what is the defign of it.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THIS chapter teaches us, in general, that it is the great duty of paftors, to form the minds of men to piety and holinefs, and carefully to inftruct all men in the duties peculiar to their ftation and calling. II. Aged perfons may from hence learn to be fober, grave, pious, and abounding in charity; Chriftian women to live likewife in fobriety; to avoid flander; to love their hufbands; to take care of their children and family: young people to be moderate, temperate, chafte, and regular in their whole behaviour; and fervants to be fubject to their mafters, and ferve them with fidelity. III. St *Paul*'s earneft addrefs to *Titus*, to be a pattern to others of purity, gravity, and good works, is an argument, that thofe who undertake to exhort and inftruct others, fhould firft practife what they teach, and fet men an example of all kind of virtues. IV. But we ought, all of us in general, carefully to attend to the fummary of the Chriftian doctrine St *Paul* gives us in this chapter, in which he fays, that the grace of God, that has been manifefted by Jefus Chrift, calls us to renounce, not

not only ungodlinefs, and direct crimes, but likewife to renounce unlawful defires, and the love of the world, and to live in temperance and purity with refpect to ourfelves, in juftice towards our neighbour, and in piety towards God; and that it is only by living thus, that we may expect with confidence the laft and glorious coming of the great God and Saviour Jefus Chrift. This doctrine the minifters of the gofpel fhould preach, and this fhould be the rule of every Chriftian's conduct: This too is the end and defign of Chrift's coming, and of his death; fince, as St *Paul* fays, he gave himfelf for us, that he might *redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himfelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

CHAP. III.

I. ST *Paul* directs Chriftians to fubmit themfelves to the higher powers, to flander no body, and to abound in meeknefs and charity, even towards thofe who were enemies of the Chriftian religion; and to remember, that God in his great mercy had faved them, when they likewife lived in all kind of irregularities. II. He orders *Titus* to recommend particularly the practice of good works to thofe who had embraced Chriftianity; to oppofe fuch as raifed difputes in the church by foolifh queftions, and to fhun thofe who formed fects and parties, and broached falfe and dangerous doctrines; and he concludes with fome directions which he gives to *Titus*.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter teaches us, I. To be fubject to kings and magiftrates, to avoid calumny and difputes, and to behave with perfect meeknefs to-

wards all. II. St *Paul* teaches us here, that *God has ſaved us, not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his mercy, — through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour. That being juſtified by his grace, we may be made heirs according to the hope of everlaſting life.* A moſt important doctrine, which ought to produce in us ſentiments of profound humility, and unfeigned thanks to God. III. The apoſtle in this chapter declares in the moſt poſitive manner, that there is nothing more certain, nor more important, nor which the miniſters of the goſpel ought to inculcate and recommend with more earneſtneſs, than this, that *they which have believed in God, ſhould be careful to maintain good works: Theſe things being good and profitable unto men.* Theſe words ſhew, that the practice of good works is the moſt indiſpenſable duty of Chriſtianity, and the diſtinguiſhing mark of a true Chriſtian. Finally, We ſee here, that when there are perſons in the church who teach dangerous doctrines, and who form ſects and parties therein, we are to admoniſh them; and, if they continue to diſturb the peace of the church we are not to own them for its members, nor to have any communication with them. This is the only method preſcribed by Chriſt and his apoſtles whereby to oppoſe error, and preſerve in the church purity of faith.

The End of the Epiſtle of St. PAUL *to* TITUS.

THE

THE

EPISTLE of St PAUL

TO

PHILEMON.

ARGUMENT.

St Paul *wrote this epistle when he was a prisoner at* Rome *the first time, about the year of Christ sixty one, the subject of which was as follows:* Philemon, *who was of the city of* Colofs, *and who, after St* Paul *had converted him to Christianity, exercised his ministry in that city with great success, had a slave, named.* Onesimus, *who ran away from him; and, coming to* Rome, *met with St* Paul, *who converted him to the Christian religion; after which he sent him back to* Philemon, *with a letter of recommendation, in which he intreats him to forgive* Onesimus, *and to receive him as a brother in Jesus Christ.*

REFLECTIONS.

WE see in this epistle, I. That *Onesimus* coming to *Rome*, after he had left his master *Philemon*, St *Paul* laboured to convert this fugitive slave, and had the comfort to bring him

over to the Christian faith. Thus this apostle embraced all occasions of promoting the glory of God, and the salvation of men; as true Christians are always ready to gain souls to God, and to recover sinners from the error of their ways. II. The apostle, after he had converted *Onesimus*, sent him back to his master, because this slave's conversion no way deprived *Philemon* of his right over him; he intreated him to forgive him, and even offered to pay him all that *Onesimus* owed him, and make satisfaction for all the wrong he might have done him. This whole proceeding of St *Paul*, is a proof of his charity, meekness, justice, and integrity. Such is the character of good men; they are always concerned for those who stand in need of their assistance, especially, for pious and godly men, or sinners who return to their duty; and they are also animated with a spirit of justice and equity, and desire to render to all their due. We may likewise make this farther reflection, that if St *Paul* offered to satisfy *Philemon* for what *Onesimus* owed him, though he was not obliged in strictness to do it; those who have done any wrong to others, are much more obliged to make it good. Lastly, The order which St *Paul* gives *Philemon*, to receive *Onesimus*, no longer as a slave, but as a brother, shews, that though Christianity does not destroy the different relations among men, but supposes and admits a difference of condition; yet it makes all men equal before God, and with respect to eternal salvation. It appears likewise from hence, that Christian masters ought to consider their servants as their brethren in Christ Jesus, and to treat them with all mildness and humanity.

THE EPISTLE of St PAUL TO THE HEBREWS.

ARGUMENT.

There is reason to believe St Paul *wrote this epistle in the year of our Lord sixty one, being a prisoner at* Rome; *and addressed it to the* Hebrews, *that is to say, to the Jews that were converted to Christianity. His design is, to confirm them in the profession of the gospel, and in holiness, and to prevent them from being drawn away by the fondness they might still have for the Jewish religion and worship, or by the persecutions, which Christians were exposed to, and the allurements of sin; for which purpose he shews, that Christ is greater than* Moses, *that the gospel is more excellent than the law, and that the ceremonies and sacrifices of the law had had their accomplishment in Jesus Christ, and were consequently abolished by his coming, and by his sacrifice. This is the subject of the first ten chapters. In the three last, he exhorts the* Hebrews *to perseverance in the faith, to patience under afflictions, and to the most important duties of religion.*

CHAP. I.

ST *Paul* teaches in this chapter, that God had revealed himself to men by Jesus Christ, in a more perfect manner than he had ever done before.

fore. He proves the excellency of the gospel, by the infinite dignity of Jesus Christ the Son of God; shewing that he was exalted to supreme glory in heaven, and that he is more excellent than the angels; and he confirms the divinity of his person.

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

I. THE first truth which St *Paul* teaches in this epistle, is, that Jesus Christ is not a mere man, or only a great prophet, or even an angel; but that he is infinitely above the prophets, and even the angels, being the only Son of God; that by him the world was made; that God has set him on his right hand; and that all the angels worship him as their Lord. Since St *Paul* first settles this doctrine of our Lord's divinity, and from thence proves the excellence of the Christian religion, it evidently appears, that our whole religion is founded on this doctrine; and, therefore, that all Christians ought to believe and embrace it. II. St *Paul* tells us, that God has spoken to us in these last days by his Son; which engages us to praise God, that we have the advantage of living under the most perfect of all dispensations, and in the happy times of the gospel. III. Since God has revealed his will to us by his own Son, and manifested himself in a more perfect manner than he had done before, it is our indispensable duty to improve the blessing of the covenant of grace, and to surpass in holiness those who lived before the coming of Jesus Christ. Lastly, The consideration of our Lord's divinity, and of the supreme power to which he is exalted in heaven, should lead us to worship him, to hope in him, and to obey the gospel we receive from him, as St *Paul* proves in the following chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

I. ST *Paul* exhorts the *Hebrews* to continue ſtedfaſt in the profeſſion of the goſpel, which had been preached to them by Jeſus Chriſt and the apoſtles, and confirmed by the gifts of the holy Ghoſt. II. He ſhews for this purpoſe, that though Jeſus was man, and humbled himſelf even unto death, yet all things are made ſubject unto him; and that God has raiſed him to heavenly glory after his ſufferings. III. He ſhews, in the laſt place, that God was pleaſed that our Lord ſhould take our nature and ſuffer, that he might redeem men from the power of the devil, and of death, and that the faithful might learn from his example not to be afraid of afflictions.

REFLECTIONS.

ST *Paul* teaches us here, I. That the goſpel having been preached by Jeſus Chriſt and the apoſtles, and confirmed by the gifts of the holy Ghoſt, we have undeniable proofs of the divinity of the Chriſtian doctrine; and that therefore we ſhall be altogether inexcuſable, and ſhall not eſcape the vengeance of God, if we neglect this great ſalvation that is offered to us, and if we do not openly profeſs the truth, and ſincerely obey the goſpel. II. The conſideration of the glory and power wherewith Chriſt was inveſted after his humiliation and death, teaches us, that the ſufferings to which the faithful are expoſed, will not hinder them from attaining to glory; it being the will of God, to bring them to glory, the ſame way that Chriſt himſelf arrived at it. III. We ought likewiſe to conſider, that the Son of God took upon him the nature of man, and was lower than the angels for a time, that through the goodneſs of God he might die for all men, make an atonement for their

ſins, and deſtroy the empire of the devil, and of death. This is a doctrine which ſhould fill us with joy, and a firm confidence in God through Chriſt, and which likewiſe very ſtrongly engages us to live as his redeemed, and to flee from ſin, leſt we ſhould fall again under the power of the devil, and of death, from which our Lord came to deliver us.

CHAP. III.

THE apoſtle does two things in this chapter: I. He ſhews, that Chriſt was far above *Moſes*, ſince *Moſes* was only a ſervant in the houſe of God; whereas Chriſt, as a Son, is the Lord and maſter of it. II. He exhorts the *Hebrews* to obey the goſpel, and not to imitate the *Iſraelites*, who were excluded from the land of *Canaan*, and who died in the wilderneſs, becauſe of their rebellion and unbelief.

REFLECTIONS.

I. WHAT St *Paul* ſays in this chapter, of the excellency of the perſon and miniſtry of Chriſt above the perſon and miniſtry of *Moſes*, ſhould make us ſenſible of the obligation which Chriſtians lie under of adhering to Chriſt by a ſincere obedience and true faith, as it proves the greatneſs of the crime which thoſe are guilty of who fall into diſobedience and unbelief. II. We are to conſider, that the ancient *Iſraelites*, for their rebellion and unbelief when *Moſes* cauſed them to hear the voice of God, died in the wilderneſs; and God ſwore that they ſhould not enter into the reſt which was prepared in the land of *Canaan* for the people of *Iſrael*. It is thus God reſolves to exclude from reſt in heaven thoſe whoſe heart wanders from the right way, and who provoke him by their rebellion and obdurateneſs. This is a powerful engagement to be attentive, and

ſubmit

submit to the gospel and to improve the day of grace, at St *Paul* speaks in this serious exhortation; *To day if you will hear the voice of God, harden not your hearts: Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God: but exhort one another daily, whilst the time and day of grace lasts, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

CHAP. IV.

I. ST *Paul* continues to shew, that as the disobedient *Israelites* did not enter into the land of *Canaan*, so neither shall the unbelieving Christians enter into the kingdom of heaven. For this purpose he observes, that what *David* says in the Psalms, of the peoples entering into God's rest, is not so much to be understood of the land of *Canaan*, as of the true rest, which consists in the enjoyment of the salvation that Christ has obtained for us. II. He concludes from thence, that we ought to labour to enter into this rest: He declares, that unbelievers shall not escape those threatenings which the word of God has denounced against them; since his word is true, and divine, and powerful. And lastly, To encourage the *Hebrews* to persevere in the Christian profession, and to be constant under afflictions, he represents that Jesus Christ is a merciful high-priest, who is ascended into heaven; and who having himself suffered, is inclined to have compassion upon our infirmities, and to assist us in all our wants.

Reflections.

WE learn from this chapter, I. That those who despise and neglect the promises of God, shall be deprived of them; and that the word of God is of no use, when it is not attended with faith in those

those that hear it; wherefore all those to whom this word is preached and these promises are made, should be careful to receive them with obedience of faith. II. St *Paul* teaches us, that there is a rest which Christ has acquired for us, and which is much more excellent than that which was promised to the *Israelites* in the land of *Canaan*; and as the *Israelites* could not enter into the rest of the land of *Canaan* because of their infidelity and rebellion, so those who do not obey Christ Jesus, and who despise his gospel, will be deprived of everlasting rest. The consequence St *Paul* would have us draw from hence, is to use our utmost endeavours to enter into that rest, lest we should fall into the like rebellion. III. To engage us to this duty, the apostle represents to us, that the word of God is true, and powerful, and that the threatnings of the gospel are no less certain; that they will be infallibly executed, and that we shall not be able to escape from him with whom we have to do, since all things are naked and open in his sight. Lastly, Since we know that Jesus, our great high-priest, entered into heaven after he had been himself tempted in all things like unto us, sin only excepted, and that he is also a gracious and merciful high-priest; we have the most powerful motives to hold fast the profession we make of believing in him, to trust in his promises, and to *come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need.*

CHAP. V.

ST *Paul* treating of the priesthood of Jesus Christ shews, I. That he was called by God to the office of a priest, which he proves by two prophecies, taken out of the book of Psalms, and particularly by that which foretels that the Messiah should be

be a high-priest after the order of *Melchisedec.* II. He says next, that Christ performed the functions of a priest, when he suffered death for the salvation of men. III. And lastly, When he is going to speak of the priesthood of our Lord, and of the resemblance there was between him and *Melchisedec*, he reproaches the *Hebrews* with the small progress they had made in the knowledge of the mysteries of religion, which he was going to explain to them.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THIS chapter teaches us, that Christ was appointed by God to be our high-priest, and that under this character he offered up himself a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. This engages us to look upon Jesus Christ as the author of our salvation, who has rendered God propitious and favourable to us; but this very doctrine should likewise convince us of our obligation to submit ourselves to the gospel, by a sincere obedience; since, as St *Paul* says, *Christ became the author of eternal salvation to those only that obey him.* II. The second reflection relates to the sufferings of Christ, which St *Paul* describes, saying, our Lord, *in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death; and was heard, in that he feared, having learnt obedience by the things which he suffered.* St *Paul* said this, not only to shew that Jesus Christ discharged on earth the office of a high-priest; but also to comfort Christians in affliction and persecution. The children of God may discover, from what happened to our Lord, that when they are exposed to sufferings, they are like their Saviour; that God sends them afflictions, to teach them patience and obedience, and to call upon him with greater zeal; and that God will hear them and deliver them, when they offer up their

prayers to him in their necessities. III. We are to consider that if the apostle reproached the *Hebrews* for being so little advanced in knowledge, that they still needed to be taught the first principles of Christianity, we should be much more ashamed to deserve the like reproaches, considering the time that is employed in instructing us; wherefore we ought to exert ourselves in acquiring new light, and in daily making greater progress in the knowledge of religion.

CHAP. VI.

ST *Paul* tells the *Hebrews*, that it was not his intention to teach them the first rudiments of religion, but that he designed to propose to them more sublime doctrines, discoursing of the similitude which there was between Christ and *Melchisedec*, and the ancient priests. II. To excite them to make a progress in the knowledge of the mysteries of the gospel, he sets before them the unhappiness of those who, neglecting to confirm themselves in the faith, and despising the knowledge and graces they have received from God, do not produce the fruits which God expects from them, and at last renounce the truth and forsake Christ. III. He tells the *Hebrews*, that the reason why he spake to them in this manner, was to awaken their zeal, since he was convinced that they would not expose themselves to the like misfortunes. IV. And lastly, To strengthen their faith, he represents to them the steadiness of God's promises, by the example of *Abraham*, and the certainty of that hope which Christ's entrance into heaven gives all believers.

REFLECTIONS.

I. WE ought to take great notice of the first verses of this chapter, in which St *Paul* shews,

ſhews us what are the fundamental articles of religion, *viz.* The doctrine of faith in God; of repentance and forſaking ſin; of baptiſm; of the reſurrection of the dead; and of the laſt judgment. Wherefore theſe are the doctrines which we ſhould all firmly believe, and which are neceſſary to ſalvation. II. The apoſtle teaches us, that it is not enough to know theſe doctrines, but that Chriſtians ought to aim at greater perfection, and to join to the knowledge of theſe eſſential truths, that of other truths, which ſerve to give light to religion, and to confirm the faith. St *Paul* even intimates, that when we neglect to improve in knowledge, we are in great danger of loſing all reliſh for the truths of religion, to renounce the faith, and fall into infidelity. III. He declares in this chapter, that thoſe who have been once enlightened, and have taſted the good word of God, and the heavenly gift; if they renounce the truth and godlineſs, cannot repent, at leaſt without extreme difficulty, and if they perſevere in that ſtate muſt periſh. This ſhould make us extremely afraid to ſin againſt light, to deſpiſe the word of God, and to reſiſt the workings of his grace, leſt we ſhould bring upon ourſelves the curſe which St *Paul* denounces againſt thoſe who abuſe the grace of God; which he repreſents by a piece of ground that is duly cultivated, and watered with frequent rains, and bears nothing but thorns and briars, and is therefore curſed, and appointed to be burned. IV. And laſtly, Thoſe who believe the goſpel, and manifeſt the ſincerity of their faith by their patience and charity, may for their comfort and encouragement conſider what the apoſtle ſays here, that *God is not unrighteous, to forget their work and labour of love*; that his promiſes are unchangeable, having been made with an oath, and confirmed by Chriſt's exaltation into heaven,

where he is entered as our forerunner. This is the hope of the faithful, which, as an anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast, penetrates even into heaven, and makes them unmoveable in the midst of the trials and afflictions to which they are exposed.

CHAP. VII.

IN this chapter St *Paul* shews the excellency of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, by considering him as a priest after the order of *Melchisedec*. For which end he observes, I. That *Melchisedec* was a priest after a different manner from the Jewish priests. This appears, because he was a king, and because the scripture does not relate his genealogy, nor say any thing either of his predecessors, or of his successors after his death; in which he was a type of Jesus Christ, who is eternal, and our only high-priest. The apostle adds, that *Melchisedec* was superior to *Abraham*, that patriarch having paid him tithes of the spoil. II. St *Paul* observes farther, that Christ was not of the family of *Aaron*, out of which the Jewish priests were chosen, and that God had promised with an oath that the priesthood according to *Melchisedec* was to be everlasting. From all these considerations St *Paul* would infer, that the priesthood of the Messiah was of a quite different nature from that of the *Jewish* priests; that he was to be both king and priest together, and the only priest; that his sacrifice was to be only one, and that most perfect; and that, consequently, the Levitical priesthood was to be abolished. III. The apostle shews, about the end of the chapter, that Christ infinitely excelled the Jewish priests by his perfect holiness.

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS.

THE principal obſervation that we are to make upon this whole chapter, is to acknowledge and admire the infinite wiſdom of God, who had ſo clearly ſignified in the ancient prophecies what the Meſſiah was to be, as St *Paul* ſhews, by proving ſo evidently out of the law itſelf, and from the Old Teſtament, that the Levitical worſhip and prieſthood were to be aboliſhed by the ſacrifice and oblation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. This ought powerfully to convince us of the truth of the goſpel, and ſtir us up to ſearch into and meditate upon the ſcriptures, and particularly the prophets, in which we find ſuch convincing proofs of the divinity of the Chriſtian doctrine. And ſince the deſign of this whole chapter is to inſtruct us in the perfection and efficacy of the ſacrifice of Chriſt, we cannot doubt but that we ſhall find in him all that is neceſſary to obtain the pardon of our ſins, and to purify our ſouls; and that having for our prieſt and our king one that is perfectly holy, and exalted above the heavens, he will be able to ſave to the utmoſt all thoſe that come to God by him.

CHAP. VIII.

THE apoſtle does two things. I. He goes on to ſhew, that Chriſt was ſuperior to the Jewiſh prieſts upon the following account: That having been exalted to heaven, he is the miniſter and high prieſt of the heavenly ſanctuary, whereas the ancient prieſts were no more than miniſters of the earthly ſanctuary. II. With the ſame view he ſhews, that God had foretold by the prophet, *Jeremiah*, that the covenant which he formerly made with the *Iſraelites* ſhould be aboliſhed, and that he would enter into a more excellent

exellent one with mankind, in which he would pardon their ſins, and ſanctify them by his ſpirit.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter engages us to make the three following reflections. I. That we have a great high prieſt in the heavens, ſet at the right hand of the divine majeſty. This entrance of Chriſt into heaven; is the greateſt proof of the perfection and efficacy of his ſacrifice, and ſhould likewiſe aſſure us, that he has procured all true believers a right to the heavenly glory, and that he will one day exalt them to it. II. The ſecond reflection relates to the happineſs we have of being admitted into the new covenant, which God had promiſed to make with men at the coming of the Meſſiah, for which we owe him our continual gratitude and thankfulneſs. III. In the third place, ſince the end which God propoſed to himſelf by this covenant was to put his laws in our heart, to fill us all with the knowledge and fear of him, and to forgive us our ſins; we ſhould remember that this covenant will be uſeleſs with reſpect to us, unleſs we on our part make ſuitable returns, and faithfully diſcharge thoſe duties which our covenant with him requires of us; this we learn from the example of the Jews, who did not keep the covenant of the Lord, and who, for that reaſon, were ejected by him. Laſtly, Since God has promiſed to write his holy laws in our hearts, and in our minds, we ſhould beſeech him, according to his promiſes, to increaſe in us his knowledge more and more, and to imprint his fear and love in our hearts by the effectual working of his grace, ſo that we may always be his true people, and he may be always our God.

CHAP. IX.

I. ST *Paul* gives us a description of the ancient tabernacle, and of the service performed therein; and he observes particularly, that the high priest entred but once a year into the most holy place; which was to shew, that the way to heaven was not yet revealed to all men. II. He informs us next, that the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the Jews, were types and figures of what was to happen one day; and especially, that the entrance of the high priest into the most holy place, signified, that Christ would enter into heaven by his own blood; and that by this means he would obtain for us an eternal redemption; his blood having a power to sanctify men, which that of the legal victims wanted. III. The apostle adds, that as the ancient covenant was confirmed by the blood of the victims, so was the new, which is far more excellent, by the blood of Christ. IV. He concludes from all this, that the sacrifice of Christ is perfect, and of an infinite value; that it must not be repeated; and that Christ being once dead, there is nothing more to be expected, but that he should come at the last day to introduce the faithful into his glory.

REFLECTIONS.

THE comparison St *Paul* makes, between the priests of the law, and Jesus Christ, tends chiefly to instruct us in the power and virtue of his death and sacrifice. We see here, that the blood of Christ has a virtue with which the legal sacrifices were not attended; forasmuch as it opens to us the way to heaven, where our Lord is entred for us, as well as for himself; which gives us the most glorious and exalted hopes. But St *Paul* teaches us likewise,

that this blood must sanctify and *purge our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God*; by which we see, that the sacrifice of Christ lays us under a necessity of labouring for our sanctification, and enables us so to do. To the same end, we must meditate upon what is said in this chapter, that the covenant of the gospel was confirmed by the blood and death of the Son of God; by which that covenant is made firm and unchangeable in all that it contains; the duties it prescribes are altogether inviolable and sacred, and its threats, as well as its promises, will be infallibly executed. Lastly, If the sacrifice of Christ was only once offered, and can never be repeated; and if there remains nothing more, but his returning at the last day to save those that wait for him, and who live in godliness; it follows from thence, that there is but one only means, and one only time to obtain salvation. The only means is, to lay hold on the grace which is offered us in Christ Jesus; and the only time is, the time of this life; since *it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment*.

CHAP. X.

I. ST *Paul* shews, that the sacrifices of the law were not capable of atoning for the sins of men, nor of sanctifying them; and that nothing but the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the oblation he has once made of his body by the will of God, could produce this effect. II. Having thus proved the imperfection of the Jewish sacrifices, and the perfection of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus, he exhorts the *Hebrews* to draw near to God with confidence, and to persevere in the profession of the Christian religion, and in the practice of good works. III. He threatens with the most terrible punishments those, who

who after having received the knowledge of the gospel, fall into disobedience and apostasy. IV. And for fear persecution should stagger the faith of Christians, and make them call in question the promises of God, he exhorts them to suffer with the same confidence as they had done till then, and to wait with patience, and with stedfast faith, the fulfilling of his promises.

REFLECTIONS.

THE first part of this chapter instructs us in the perfection of the sacrifice of Christ, and of its effects. St *Paul* teaches us, that our sins were expiated by the oblation Christ made of his body upon the cross; and that after having offered himself as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind, he is set down for ever on the right hand of God. Besides this, the apostle makes us consider the sacrifice of our Lord as an effect of his submission to the will of his Father, and of his love towards us. These are considerations which should convince us, that the work of our redemption is fully accomplished, which should inspire us with an ardent love for this gracious Saviour, and engage us likewise to submit in all things to the will of God. The second part of this chapter furnishes us with these four instructions. I. That since Christ has obtained for us, by his death and ascension, an entrance into heaven, we may draw near to God with full assurance, if we do it with a heart purified and cleansed from the defilements of sin. II. That we ought to persevere in the open profession of the faith, and excite one another continually to piety, charity, and all good works. III. That although the gospel be a covenant of grace, yet it threatens with the most dreadful punishments those that shall break it; that the punishments which the gospel denounces against those that shall despise the blood of the Son of God,

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and affront his holy Spirit, are infinitely more terrible, than what was inflicted upon those who violated the law of *Moses*; that there remains no more sacrifice for rebellious and apostate Christians, that they have nothing to expect but a tremendous judgment, and that it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. IV. This portion of scripture teaches us, that Christians ought never to faint under persecutions; that they ought even to suffer with joy the loss of their goods, and the most grievous afflictions, since they will afterwards infallibly meet with a great reward from God; and that when they have done his will, they shall receive the fruit of his promises.

CHAP. XI.

THE apostle, to confirm the faith of the *Hebrews* in time of persecution, proposes to them the example of the patriarchs, and of the faithful of old, who, by their faith and trust in the promises of God, had been acceptable to him, and had overcome the severest trials. Upon this account he speaks of the nature of faith, and its surprising effects, and alledges the examples of *Abel*, *Enoch*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, and *Sarah*; to which he adds that of *Isaac*, *Jacob*, and *Joseph*, who, by the blessings which they gave their children, and by what they said before their death, shewed that they were convinced that the promises of God should be fulfilled. He speaks of *Moses*, of the delivering the children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, and their subduing the land of *Canaan*; and lastly, of the judges, of *Samuel*, of *David*, and of divers prophets and martyrs, who by their faith had done great miracles, and had endured with constancy all kind of torments, and even death itself.

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS.

I. THIS chapter instructs us in the nature of faith, and its effects. St *Paul* teaches us here, that faith is a strong and lively persuasion of the truth of God's promises, and makes us consider them as present, though we do not yet see them; that it consists in believing that there is a God, the rewarder of those that serve him; and that we cannot be acceptable to him without faith. II. The apostle sets before us the wonderful effects of faith, in the examples of *Abel*, *Enoch*, *Noah*, the patriarchs and prophets, and other illustrious saints before Christ. From all these examples we may observe in general, I. That in all ages, from the beginning of the world, there have been holy men, who have believed in God, hoped in his promises, and have shewn the sincerity of their faith, by obeying God under the greatest difficulties. II. That faith has always been necessary, and no one was ever acceptable to God but by faith. III. That true faith has always produced these three effects, *viz.* Trust in God's promises, obedience to his commands, and constancy in afflictions. This we have an example of in the patriarch *Abraham*, who gave such extraordinary proofs of his faith, in leaving his own country, and offering up his son *Isaac*, and living, as his sons did, a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, expecting a better life, and seeking a heavenly country. The same is very remarkable likewise in the conduct of *Moses*, who chose rather to suffer with the people of God, than to enjoy the advantages that were offered him in *Egypt*; as well as in the surprising constancy of the ancient martyrs under persecution, and the most cruel tortures. All these examples should enliven our faith in an extraordinary manner, inspire us with courage and zeal, and engage us to obey God in all things,

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and even to suffer every thing for his sake. And if we consider, as St *Paul* observes at the end of this chapter, that we have many advantages, which those who lived before the coming of Christ did not enjoy, we shall find ourselves under a much stricter obligation to walk in the footsteps of those holy and illustrious servants of God, that by imitating their faith, we may, like them, arrive at perfection and salvation.

CHAP. XII.

I. ST *Paul* exhorts the *Hebrews* to imitate the examples of the faithful under the Old Testament, which he had set before them in the preceeding chapter; but above all the example of Christ; and to suffer afflictions with patience. II. He further observes to them, that afflictions are the signs and effects of God's love, and that great advantage results from them to true believers; and encourages them, by these considerations, to suffer persecution with patience. III. He exhorts them to holiness and perseverance in the faith; and advises them to shun every thing that might occasion their falling away from the grace of God, and not to suffer themselves to be seduced by sensuality. IV. He compares the manner in which the law was given on mount *Sinai*, with the manner of publishing the gospel; by which comparison he designs to shew, how severe their punishment will be, who despise the voice of Christ, and violate the covenant of grace.

REFLECTIONS.

WE learn from hence, I. That the examples of the saints and true believers, who formerly rendered themselves acceptable to God by their faith, patience and obedience, has a great tendency to incite us to the same duties; especially since God has vouchsafed

safed us greater light, and more grace than to them; and, above all, as we have before our eyes the example of Christ, the author and finisher of our faith. II. The apostle instructs us concerning the nature of afflictions; and though what he says relates properly to persecution for the sake of the gospel, it may be applied to afflictions in general; since it is always true, that God chastens us in love, to render us partakers of his holiness; and that afflictions produce very happy effects in those who receive them as they ought. This doctrine engages us in the two following duties: The one is, neither to faint, nor to murmur in affliction; but to suffer it patiently, and even with joy, of what kind soever it be; since it is God our Father that sends it, and he only does it for our good: The other duty is, to answer the ends which God proposes to himself by afflicting us, to make a right use of the evils we undergo, and to make them instruments of our amendment and advancement in holiness. III. We learn in this chapter our indispensable obligation to study to live in peace and holiness, without which we cannot see the Lord. IV. The apostle advises us to labour with great diligence to preserve ourselves in the favour of God, and to take care that there be in us no seed of unbelief and rebellion that may deprive us of it: And he proves, by the example of *Esau*, that it is of the greatest importance to avoid sensuality, and not to prefer the vain and frivolous advantages of the world, before that everlasting happiness which God offers us, lest we be deprived of the blessing of our heavenly Father. Lastly, The comparison which the apostle here makes between the law and the gospel, offers us these two reflections: The first is, that we live under a covenant much more excellent than that of the Jews, and therefore are strictly obliged to keep and obey it. For this reason St *Paul* reminds us, that we are mem-

bers of the Christian church, that the gospel has been preached to us by the Son of God himself, and confirmed by his own blood; and, that God calls us to the possession of an infinite glory in heaven with all the saints and angels. The second reflection is, that though the gospel was not published with such awful solemnity as the law was formerly upon mount *Sinai*; and though we live under a dispensation of grace and mercy; those who shall despise the voice of Christ have reason to fear punishments much more severe than those denounced against the Jews. This is what St *Paul* expresses in these words: *If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, that we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire.*

CHAP. XIII.

I. IN this last chapter, the apostle exhorts the *Hebrews* to charity, chastity, content of mind, and trust in God. II. He recommends to them to remember their spiritual guides, and not to be drawn away from the pure doctrine which he had taught them, either by those who wanted to retain the sacrifices and ceremonies of the *Mosaical* law, or by fear of persecution. III. He prescribes to them the true Christian sacrifice of praise and beneficence, and charges them to submit to their pastors. IV. and lastly, He recommends himself to their prayers, and prays for their sanctification.

REFLECTIONS.

THE duties prescribed in this chapter are the following: I. To love one another as brethren;

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to exercise charity and hospitality; and to take care of those that suffer persecution for the gospel. II. To live in chastity, whether in a single or married state; to abhor all kind of uncleanness, remembering that God will one day judge the impure. III. To flee covetousness, to be content with our condition, and always to rely upon the providence of God. IV. To look upon the things of the world, and what flatters the desires of the flesh, as St *Paul* would have Christians look upon the ceremonies of the law; and, to remember that the character of Christians, and faith in Christ crucified, call us to take up our cross, and to live in this world as those who *have no continuing city here, but seek one to come.* V. Never to neglect the duty of praise and thanksgivings, nor that of charity and alms; both of them being most pleasing sacrifices to God. VI. St *Paul*, as usual, charges Christians to remember their pastors, to obey them, and submit to them, as those who watch for their souls, and to pray continually for them. Lastly, He concludes these exhortations, and this epistle, with this prayer in behalf of the *Hebrews*, and which we ought to make for ourselves, and for one another: *May the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

The End of the Epistle of St PAUL *to the* HEBREWS.

THE

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF St JAMES.

ARGUMENT.

This epistle and the following are called Catholic, that is to say, universal or general, because they were wrote to Christians in general, and not to some particular persons or churches. This of St James *is directed to the Jews of the twelve tribes, who had been long dispersed in divers countries, and had embraced the Christian religion. The design of it is, to strengthen them against persecutions, and chiefly against certain false teachers, and hypocrites, who professing themselves Christians, and boasting that they knew more than others, lived in sin and licentiousness. What time this epistle was written is not certain.*

CHAP. I.

I. THE apostle here exhorts the believers to rejoice in afflictions, and to seek by prayer for that assistance which they stood in need of to support them. II. He comforts those Christians who were persecuted or despised by the world, and he

he exhorts the rich to be humble. III. He speaks against those, who, yielding to persecution and other temptations, threw the fault on God, and maintained that he inclined men to sin; and shews, that God being perfectly holy, can incline men to nothing but good. IV. He condemns those who contented themselves with hearing the word of God, without observing its directions; and those proud teachers, who presumed on themselves, and spoke evil of others: he shews, that the religion of such persons is vain; and teaches, that true religion consists in the practice of works of charity, and in renouncing the world.

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

THIS chapter contains several useful instructions: I. The first is, that afflictions, and particularly those which we suffer for the gospel, ought to be an occasion of joy to all Christians, since they serve to try them, to render them perfect, and to make them obtain the crown of life, which God has promised to those that love him. II. That God never refuses his grace and spiritual gifts to such as ask them of him with faith, and therefore it is our own fault if we are not endowed with them. III. That those true believers, who are but in a mean station in this world, should glory in the Lord; and on the contrary, that the rich and great ought to entertain sentiments of humility. IV. The fourth instruction, well worth our observation, is, that God is by no means the author of sin and temptation, but that sin does only proceed from ourselves; and that God is so far from being the cause of sin, that he is the author of all good, since he has regenerated us by his word, that we may become new creatures. V. St *James* teaches us, that it is not sufficient to hear the word of God, but that our great and principal business is, to practise what

what it commands; to attend to it with a peaceable, meek, and teachable disposition; and with a heart free from disorderly passions. VI. and lastly, We may learn from hence, that those who think themselves holy, and better than other men, and yet do not govern their tongue, are falsly religious; and that solid piety and true religion do chiefly consist in exercising charity towards the unhappy, and in preserving ourselves pure, so as not to be defiled by the corruptions of the world.

CHAP. II.

THIS chapter consists of two parts. I. St *James* reproves those who had regard to rich men, and despised the poor in the assemblies of the church. He shews, that faith in Christ Jesus did not allow of such distinction, since God has chosen the poor, as well as the rich, to give them the kingdom of heaven; and that the evangelical law, by which we are to be judged, is the law of charity and liberty. II. In the second part, St *James* confutes those who maintained, that we can be justified by faith in Christ, without good works; and he shews, by the very nature of faith, and by the examples of *Abraham* and *Rahab*, that the faith which is not attended with good works is vain, and cannot save us.

REFLECTIONS.

IN the first part of this chapter we are taught, I. That Christians ought to prove by their behaviour, that they look upon one another as brethren, especially in their religious assemblies; and, in general, that no one should esteem the rich, because of his riches, nor despise the poor because of their poverty, since faith and piety may be found in the poor and mean, as well as in the rich and great; and since God

God has likewise chosen the poor, who are rich in faith, to make them heirs of his kingdom. This too should teach the rich not to entertain sentiments of pride, nor despise or oppress the poor. II. St *James* teaches us, that the law of Christ is a law of charity, humility, and true liberty, and that God will judge us by that law. III. That he who breaks the law of God in one commandment, is as guilty in his sight, as if he had broken all the commandments; because all the commandments of this law proceed from God, and therefore we cannot wilfully transgress any one of them, without despising the majesty and authority of the Lawgiver; which proves, that true piety consists in the practice of our whole duty, and that the abandoning ourselves to one sin only, and the continuing in one evil habit, is sufficient to exclude us from salvation. In the next place, it greatly concerns us to observe, what St *James* teaches concerning justification, in the second part of this chapter, and with what strength of argument he disproves the impious doctrine of those, who held that we are justified by faith without good works. The apostle shews, that true faith is necessarily attended with good works, and that the faith which does not produce good works is vain and dead: this he confirms by the example of *Abraham*, who manifested the sincerity of his faith by his obedience to God, in offering his son *Isaac*; as also, by the example of *Rahab*, who, by receiving the spies sent by *Joshua* to *Jericho*, shewed that she was firmly persuaded God would give the land of *Canaan* to the children of *Israel*. From hence we may gather, that those who neglect good works, and do not prove their faith by a holy life, and by obedience to God's commands, are without true faith, and can by no means be justified, nor partake of salvation.

CHAP. III.

I. ST *James* forbids Chriſtians to ſet up themſelves for teachers, and maſters over others, or to condemn or ſpeak evil of other perſons; and he repreſents what miſchiefs and diſorders the tongue may produce. II. He obſerves next, that meekneſs, forbearance, and love of peace, are the tokens by which true Chriſtians are to be diſtinguiſhed; and that herein lies the difference between true and falſe wiſdom. We muſt obſerve, that what St *James* ſays here, relates to certain perſons, who thought themſelves more knowing and more perfect than others, who condemned with great pride and ſeverity thoſe that were not of their opinion, and thereby diſturbed the peace of the church.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THIS chapter treats firſt of the ſins into which we may fall by the tongue, which we ought moſt ſeriouſly to obſerve. St *James* teaches us here, that the tongue may be the occaſion of numberleſs evils; that by our diſcourſe we may ſin many ways againſt God, and againſt our neighbour; that by it the edification of the church may be deſtroyed, and the fire of diviſion and diſcord kindled. This obliges us to regulate our words by the fear of God; to ſpeak little; to avoid above all ſlander and calumny; and to abſtain from every thing in diſcourſe, that is contrary to charity and humility. That this duty is of the greateſt importance, St *James* teaches us, when he remarks, that one of the ſureſt tokens of true piety, is to know how to govern the tongue. The apoſtle, in this chapter, gives us another mark, whereby to know thoſe who are endowed with ſolid piety and true wiſdom; namely, meekneſs and great moderation

moderation in their discourse and all their behaviour. He declares in the strongest terms, that those who think themselves more knowing and more pious than others, but are indiscreet and insolent in their words, ill-natured, and full of envy and pride, and that speak evil of others, and occasion divisions, are only hypocrites; he says, that wherever malice and slander prevails, there is all kind of evil, and no good to be expected. Lastly, He teaches us, that the true piety, which proceeds from heaven, is pure, peaceable, moderate, full of mercy and good fruits, sincere, and without hypocrisy. All therefore who desire to be truly wise, should study to acquire this divine wisdom, the foundation of which is charity; and to put on this spirit of meekness, moderation, sincerity and peace. Thus will they experience, both in this world and the other, what St *James* says in the last words of this chapter: *That the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace.*

CHAP. IV.

I. ST *James* having mentioned the evils which the tongue and a spirit of strife and dissention do produce, shews in this chapter, that all these disorders proceed from carnal passions, and particularly from the love of pleasures, from pride, from a desire of preeminence above others, from the love of the world, and from a spirit of envy and jealousy. II. He exhorts those in whom these passions reign, to humble themselves, and draw near to God by repentance; and he particularly forbids slandering and rash judgments. III. and lastly, He condemns those who form projects and designs, without reflecting upon the vanity of life, and without considering that they depend upon the providence of God.

REFLEC-

Reflections.

We learn here, I. That the love of pleasure, and our other passions, are the principal cause of those evils which men do to one another, and of the divisions that prevail in the church. Wherefore we ought to wean our hearts from these passions, and particularly from the love of the world, which is the sourse of all irregular desires, and from pride; remembering that the scripture says not in vain, that *whosoever will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God*; and that *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.* II. We see, in this chapter, that when our passions, and the love of the world, have led us astray from God, we must draw near to him again by repentance; we must be sensible of our misery, bewail our faults, resist temptations, renounce the things of this world, and purify our hearts and all our actions; and then he will draw near to us. III. The apostle teaches us, that calumny is a great sin, since he who speaks evil of his brother, who judges and condemns him, takes upon him to do that which belongs to none but God. IV. St *James* advises us to remember in all our designs, and particularly in those in which we have interest and advantage in view, that our life is short and uncertain, that it vanishes away like smoke; that it is, therefore, a great folly to form remote projects, presuming upon the duration of our own lives, and upon our own industry; and that we ought to depend upon the providence of God in all things. V. We learn from hence, that it is not sufficient for us to know our duty, but that we ought to make a right use of our knowledge, and the opportunities we have of doing good; without which our knowledge will only make us more guilty before God. This is the important

portant advice contained in these words: *He that knoweth good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.*

CHAP. V.

I. THE apostle having spoken, in the foregoing chapter, of those who labour to heap up riches, without considering that they depend upon providence, denounces the judgments of God against the rich and covetous, against those that live in voluptuousness, and oppress the poor. II. He afterwards applies himself to Christians in affliction; he exhorts them to wait with patience for the coming of the Lord; not to complain too bitterly against those that did them evil; and to avoid every thing that denoted impatience, and particularly swearing. III. He shews lastly, the duty of those that are in affliction; orders those that are sick to send for the pastors of the church, and promises that they shall be healed, after the pastors had prayed for them, and anointed them with oil. This anointing was a ceremony practised in those times, by the means of which God wrought miraculous cures. St *James* speaks likewise of the confession of sin, of the efficacy of prayer, and of the fruits of brotherly reproof.

REFLECTIONS.

WHAT has been said in this chapter ought to be a warning, I. To the rich; since St *James* threatens with the curse of God all those rich men that are covetous, unjust, or make use of their wealth to live in pomp and luxury; those to whom God has given wealth, ought carefully to avoid covetousness, injustice, and voluptuousness; and to consider the vanity of riches, the temptations to which they expose men, and the terrible misfortunes into which all those fall who set their heart upon them, or

make a bad use of them. II. The apostle exhorts good men in affliction, and such was the condition of most good men at that time, to suffer without complaining and murmuring, or fretting against any one, and to wait with patience till the Lord shall please to deliver them; and he informs them, that to learn patience, it will be of great use to meditate continually upon the sufferings of the saints, and the happy issue of all their afflictions. III. This chapter teaches us, that all vain and rash oaths, of what kind soever, are absolutely forbid Christians, as well as all hasty and angry expressions. IV. That those who are afflicted, ought to seek for comfort in prayer; that sick persons should call for their pastors to pray with them; and that the confession of sins and prayer, when performed with zeal, faith, and in a spirit of love, are of great weight in the sight of God. We may learn from the last words of this epistle, that to reprove and admonish those who live in sin and error, is of very great advantage, not only to those who are admonished, but likewise to those who admonish them, since thereby we deliver a soul from death, and even obtain from God the forgiveness of our own sins.

The End of the GENERAL EPISTLE *of St* JAMES.

THE

FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL

OF

ST PETER.

ARGUMENT.

St Peter *wrote this epistle to the Christians dwelling in the provinces of* Asia minor, *who were most of them dispersed Jews; and it tends to confirm them in faith and holiness. It contains several very weighty instructions, and is one of the finest books in the New Testament.*

CHAP. I.

I. ST *Peter* praises God for having called Christians to salvation by Jesus Christ; for supporting them by this hope, and even filling them with joy in the midst of afflictions and persecutions. II. He shews how happy they were to know Christ, and to be witnesses of the accomplishment of the prophecies in the gospel. III. He exhorts them, by divers motives, to holiness, and to a life worthy of their Christian calling.

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

IN this chapter we are engaged to three principal duties. I. To render fervent and continual thanks to God for choosing us to salvation, and for giving us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, a firm and glorious hope of immortality. II. To consider seriously our happiness in knowing these mysteries, which were the expectation of the prophets, and the subject of their prophecies, and which are still the meditation and admiration of angels; God having afforded us in the gospel, the accomplishment of those promises which the prophets had made concerning the coming of the Messiah, and the redemption of mankind. III. The third duty is to remember, that all these glorious advantages oblige us to lead a pure and holy life. To persuade us to this, St *Peter* represents, 1. That God has delivered us from the ignorance and corruption in which men were involved when they knew not Christ. 2. That as God who has called us is holy, we ought likewise to be holy in our whole behaviour. 3. That the God whom we invoke as a father, is likewise our judge, and will render to all of us according to our works. 4. That we have been redeemed and consecrated to God by the precious blood of Christ. And lastly, That we have received a new birth by the preaching of the gospel, which is the word of the living God, and remains for ever. These are powerful inducements to a holy and Christian life; let us have them continually before our eyes, and let us beseech God to render them efficacious in our hearts, by the power of the holy spirit. *Amen.*

CHAP. II.

I. ST *Peter* exhorts Christians to live in innocence, to grow in the knowledge and grace of Jesus Christ, to cleave to him more and more by faith, and the imitation of his life; that so being united to him, and to each other by love, they may together compose one church, a temple devoted to the Lord: to engage them to which, he sets before them, on one hand, the unhappiness of unbelievers who rejected Christ; and on the other, the favour God had done them, in choosing them to be his people, consecrated to his service and to his glory. II. He exhorts them next, to renounce the desires of the flesh, and to edify the Gentiles by their good behaviour; to submit themselves to kings and magistrates, and to love and honour all men. He recommends to Christian slaves, who served heathen masters, to be in subjection to them, and to bear with patience whatever was unneasy and disagreeable in their condition; upon which occasion, he speaks of the obligation Christians were under to imitate the patience of Jesus Christ.

REFLECTIONS.

WE remark in this chapter, I. That the character of the true children of God, is innocence, meekness, simplicity, sincerity, a real aversion to wickedness and hypocrisy, and a continual desire of advancing in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. II. We have here a beautiful description of the calling of the Gentiles. St *Peter* says, that the faithful are as so many living stones, which

compoſe a holy temple, in which there are offered ſpiritual ſacrifices, acceptable to God through Jeſus Chriſt; and that the church is an aſſembly of kings and prieſts, and choſen people, a people which God has purchaſed to himſelf. This engages us to conſider well the glorious condition to which God has exalted us, and to acknowledge the great goodneſs of God in chooſing us for his people, who were formerly miſerable heathens. And thoſe noble titles given us by the apoſtle, ſhould inſpire us with ſentiments worthy of ſo holy a calling, and of perſons conſecrated to the ſervice and glory of God. The duties which our holy and heavenly calling requires of us, are, as St *Peter* has deſcribed them with ſo much beauty and energy, to ſhew forth the power of his grace, who has called us from darkneſs to his marvellous light; to *abſtain from fleſhly luſts, that war againſt the ſoul*; remembering that we are *ſtrangers and pilgrims here upon earth*; to edify all men by a prudent and innocent behaviour; to fear God, reverence and ſubmit ourſelves to all our ſuperiors, and to render to all their due. Laſtly, It is one of the greateſt duties of Chriſtians to ſuffer patiently all the evils that may be brought upon them, and to ſet before them the example of our redeemer, who, though he was guilty of no ſin, did notwithſtanding ſuffer with ſuch wonderful patience; leaving us an example, that we ſhould follow his ſteps.

C H A P. III.

I. ST *Peter* goes on with the duties of Chriſtianity, and preſcribes, I. The duties of wives and huſbands. II. He exhorts all Chriſtians to love one another, and to live in peace and innocency; aſſuring

ing them that this is the way to be happy, even in this life, and in the midst of persecutions. III. To engage Christians to suffer persecutions patiently, and to make an open profession of the gospel, he tells them what Christ had suffered to atone for the sins of mankind, and to bring to God the Gentiles, and people who were in bondage to sin and ignorance; that entring into the church by baptism, and becoming new creatures, they might be saved, as *Noah* and his family had been formerly in the ark, in the time of the flood.

REFLECTIONS.

I. ST *Peter* exhorts Christian women to be subject to their husbands, to behave with great meekness, to avoid luxury and immodesty in their apparel, and to be inwardly adorned with a pure, gentle, and peaceable spirit, which is of great value in the sight of God. Upon this he takes occasion to represent to the women who had husbands that were heathens, that by purity and innocence of manners, and by a modest and respectful behaviour, they might incline them to think favourably of religion, and even convert them to Christianity. Women who have the misfortune to be yoked with morose, ill-natured husbands, may learn from hence, how much piety and meekness may help to render their condition more supportable. II. He exhorts husbands to love their wives, to behave with prudence and kindness towards them, that their prayers be not hindered by their want of union. III. All Christians in general are here excited to mutual and unfeigned love, are taught to injure no one, not to revenge themselves, but to live in peace with all the world: St *Peter* telling them, with *David*, that this

is the way to make life much more agreeable, to pacify our enemies, and to be happy even when we are persecuted. IV. We see in this chapter, that one of the principal duties of a Christian is, to make a sincere profession of Christianity, to keep a good conscience, and to be always ready to give an account of our faith with meekness and respect, upon all occasions that offer themselves. V. Towards the end of this chapter St *Peter* teaches us, that Christ suffered and rose again, and caused the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles, to redeem men from the slavery of sin; and that as *Noah* was formerly saved in the ark, we are likewise saved by baptism, which procures us admittance into the church of God; whence it follows, that we cannot attain to salvation but by faith in Christ; that it is necessary to make a publick profession of that faith in baptism; but that baptism is not sufficient to save us, if it be not accompanied with a pure conscience. And lastly, That those who obey not the gospel shall perish in their unbelief, like the inhabitants of the old world, who did not improve by the patience and forbearance of God, nor hearken to the preaching of *Noah*; for which reason, they perished in the waters of the flood.

CHAP. IV.

ST *Peter* teaches in this chapter, I. That the sufferings of Jesus Christ obliged Christians to renounce the errors in which they lived before their conversion to the Christian religion; and particularly, the impure and dissolute life of the Gentiles; and to live in sobriety and godliness, waiting for the coming of our Lord. II. That Christians ought above all things to love and assist one another; and each

each one to employ, to the glory of God, the different gifts he has received from him. III. That far from being surprised and discouraged at the sufferings they underwent for the gospel, they should account them very honourable; and further, that if the faithful themselves are exposed to so many sufferings, and God spare not his church in this world, those who persecuted the faithful, and opposed the gospel, would not escape the righteous judgment of God.

Reflections.

THIS chapter contains several very useful instructions, I. That the consideration of what Christ suffered, engages us very strongly to renounce sin, and the lusts of the flesh, and particularly to avoid impurity and intemperance. II. That those who profess to fear God, ought not to think it strange if they are blamed by worldly men for not living like them, nor be moved either by their example or contempt. III. The third lesson is, always to set before our eyes the end of all things, and the last coming of our Lord, to be prepared for it by a sober life, by diligence in prayer, and by the practice of the duties of charity. IV. That we ought every one of us to make use of the different talents we have received from God, whether they be temporal or spiritual, for his glory, and for the advantage of our neighbour; and that this is what those especially if they have any extraordinary talents, or any office in the church, are particularly obliged to. Lastly, St *Peter* teaches us, that it is both honourable and joyous to suffer as a Christian; and that if the faithful and righteous are exposed to so many evils, unbelievers and wicked men

may expect much more terrible punishments. This consideration is very proper to encourage Christians to endure patiently, and even with gladness, all the evils which the profession of the gospel brings upon them from the wicked; and to inspire us all with a dread of God's judgments, and excite us more and more to a life of holiness.

CHAP. V.

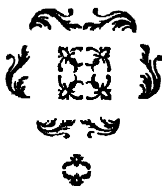
ST *Peter* exhorts in this chapter, I. Pastors to discharge their duty. II. Young people to be in submission to their pastors and teachers, and to be humble. III. All Christians in general to live in sobriety and watchfulness, and to resist the temptations of the devil. IV. He concludes his epistle with wishes and salutations.

Reflections.

THIS chapter describes, I. The duty of pastors, and the glorious reward they will receive from the Lord Jesus, if they faithfully discharge the duties of their ministry. What St *Peter* says on this subject, ought to engage those who are in that office to serve God with integrity, to feed the flock of the Lord, to watch carefully over the sheep with which they are intrusted, and to exercise their charge, not by constraint, nor with a view of pride or interest, but with affection, and willingly, and in such a manner as to become examples to them of humility, and all kinds of virtue. II. St *Peter* teaches young people, that submission to their pastors belongs particularly to their age and condition; and all Christians in general are to remember, that humility is one of the principal virtues in Christianity, since *God resisteth the proud,*

proud, and giveth grace to the humble. III. We are to remark, that our condition in this world exposes us to the temptations of the devil, and to various dangers; from which we cannot be secured without sobriety, vigilance, and continuing stedfast in the faith. Lastly, The prayer with which St *Peter* concludes this chapter, teaches us, that the Christian profession, and the hopes of eternal glory, oblige us to aspire more and more after perfection; and that the way to attain it, is to trust in God and to implore the continual help of his grace; beseeching *the God of peace, who has called us to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, to make us perfect, to establish, strengthen, and settle us; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.* Amen.

The End of the First EPISTLE *of St* PETER.



THE

SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL

OF

ST PETER.

ARGUMENT.

It appears from this very epistle that St Peter *wrote it a little before his death, about the year of Christ sixty six, to confirm Christians in the faith, in sound doctrine and the practice of good works; and to prevent their being led away by false teachers, who to the profession of Christianity joined a carnal life; and to put them upon their guard against certain profane persons, that called in question the second coming of Christ. This epistle, as well as the foregoing, bears very evident marks of its divine authority, and is writ with great strength and majesty.*

CHAP. I.

I. ST *Peter* in this chapter shews, that God having given us all that is necessary to live in holiness, we ought to join to our faith the practice of Christian virtues, and that this is the only means to enter into the kingdom of God.

II. He

II. He next reprefents to the faithful, that he exhorted them after this manner, becaufe he forefaw that he fhould be foon taken away from them by death. III. and laftly, He proves the truth of the gofpel by the transfiguration of Jefus Chrift, and by the prophecies of the Old Teftament.

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

AT the beginning of this epiftle we are taught, I. That God in his goodnefs and power, and by the glorious promifes he has given us in the gofpel, has afforded us every thing neceffary to produce in us a fpiritual and holy life, and make us partakers of the divine nature. St *Peter* could not more fully prove, that the end and defign of God's giving us his grace, is to make us live a godly life; that, with the affiftance of God's grace, we may recover from the corruptions of the world, and even attain to a great degree of perfection; that no neceffary affiftance is wanting to enable us to do it; and that, therefore, we are inexcufable if we do not. II. St *Peter* fets down particularly what our duty is in this refpect, exhorting us to add to our faith prudence, temperance, patience, holinefs, brotherly love, and charity; and to endeavour to make our calling and election fure; and fhews the abfolute neceffity of all thefe duties, becaufe we cannot any other way fecure an entrance into the kingdom of God: but he tells us farther, that thofe who neglect thefe duties are blind, and will perifh in their fins. III. The care St *Peter* took to warn Chriftians before his death, fhews, that they who can be ufeful to their neighbours, ought to endeavour it whilft they are in this world, and to double their zeal as their end draws nigh. The minifters of the gofpel ought particularly to dedicate their whole lives to this great end. IV. We fee that St *Peter* proves the truth and divinity of the Chriftian doctrine,

trine, by the testimony which he and his companions had rendered, of that which happened to our Lord when he was transfigured, and by the prophecies of the Old Testament. This obliges us seriously to attend to these proofs, and carefully to read and meditate on the gospel, and writings of the apostles and prophets. As to the prophecies, we should consider particularly, that they were formerly somewhat obscure, but that at present they are very clear, and very proper to confirm us in the faith, and in our obedience to the doctrine and precepts of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

CHAP. II.

I. THE apostle foretels, that false teachers should arise, who would cause divisions, and introduce pernicious doctrines; and he shews, by the punishment of the wicked angels, by the flood, and by the destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, that these deceivers, and those who followed them, should not remain unpunished. II. In the next place, he describes these false teachers as sensual persons, and such as speak evil of dignities; as unclean, addicted to covetousness, full of pride, vain and deceitful in their words; seducing the simple by their false promises of liberty; and he shews, that they involved in the greatest miseries all those that hearkned to them; and who, after they had known the truth, suffered themselves to be led away by their discourses.

REFLECTIONS.

WE may learn from hence, I. That there were in all times, and always will be, false teachers, who endeavour to introduce dangerous doctrines, and to form sects and parties in the church. It was necessary this prediction should be often repeated by the

the apoſtles, that in after-ages we might not be ſurpriſed at the appearance of theſe ſeducers, and might take care not to fall into the ſnares they ſhould lay for us. II. This chapter ſhews us, that God has in all ages given proofs of his juſtice, as appears more particularly in the puniſhment of the rebellious angels, in the flood, and in the deſtruction of *Sodom* and the neighbouring cities. Theſe examples teach us, as the apoſtle ſays, that *the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reſerve the unjuſt unto the day of judgment to be puniſhed: But chiefly, that thoſe who walk after the fleſh, in the luſt of uncleanneſs*, ſhall receive the puniſhment they deſerve; as is proved particularly by the deſtruction of the old world, and the burning of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. III. We are to give a particular attention to the characters by which the apoſtle repreſents theſe falſe teachers, telling us, that they were proud, enemies to government, entertaining ſuch notions of independence as tended to ſedition; that they were covetous, deſigning men; inconſtant, boaſters; and, above all, addicted to ſenſual pleaſures. This ſhews us, that we ought to ſhun thoſe in whom we find theſe characters, as dangerous perſons, and that we ought chiefly to abominate all ſuch doctrines as have a tendency to theſe ſins, and which ſoothe us in our vices. By which we may likewiſe perceive, that it is the corruption of the heart, and of the paſſions, which commonly engage men in error. IV. Thoſe to whom God has given knowledge and grace, ought to improve what they learn in this chapter, namely, that when having received theſe advantages, they ſuffer themſelves to be overcome by the pollutions of the world, their laſt condition will be worſe than the firſt; and that it were better for them never to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than to turn aſide from it after they have known it. This is a moſt neceſſary piece

of advice, and such as ought to induce even good people to a fear attended with watchfulness and precaution, and to exert continually their utmost endeavours to keep themselves, and to improve in the way of godliness.

CHAP. III.

I. THE apostle foretels, that there should be in the church profane men, who would call in question the second coming of Christ. To refute these, he declares, that as the world was formerly destroyed by the waters of the flood, it would likewise one day perish by fire; and that, if the coming of Christ were retarded, it was because God would give men time to repent. II. He shews, that the belief and expectation of the end of all things, and the hopes of being partakers of the world to come, oblige us to unwearied endeavours after holiness and perfection.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter treats of the last coming of Christ, and of the end of the world; and of the effect which this doctrine ought to produce in us. Upon the former of these articles we ought to consider these four things: I. That since it has been foretold, that there would be in the last times scoffers, who would deny the most certain and most important truths of religion, we ought not to be surprised if there be some in our times; but wherever we find them, to shun them as the most dangerous and worst of men. II. That it is likewise most certain, that the world must have an end, and that Jesus Christ shall come at the last day to judge the world. This we have a sure proof of in the flood; which is a fact undeniable, and universally acknowledged. III. That if God delays the punishment of the ungodly, and the last judgment, it

it is owing to his goodneſs towards men, and that he may allow them time to repent, which ſhould excite us to make a right uſe of the forbearance and patience of the Lord. IV. St *Peter* teaches us, that as the world was formerly deſtroyed by water, it will be conſumed at the laſt day by fire; and the deſcription which is here made of this end of the world, ſhews us what will be the majeſty and terror of the laſt appearance of the Son of God. As for the effect which this doctrine ſhould produce, the apoſtle tells us, that ſince we know that this world is to be deſtroyed, and that there will be new heavens and a new earth, in which righteouſneſs will dwell, we cannot apply ourſelves with too great earneſtneſs to a holy life, and works of piety, ſo as not to be ſurpriſed by that day, and to be then found by the Lord without ſpot or blemiſh. This conſequence, which St *Peter* draws from the end of the world, ſhould convince us, that nothing is of more uſe to animate us to a holy and Chriſtian life, than continually meditating upon the end of all things, and the univerſal judgment. Let us therefore never forget theſe inſtructions; and *ſeeing we know theſe things before, let us beware leſt we alſo be led away with the error of the wicked*; *but let us grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: to whom be glory both now and for ever.* Amen.

The End of the Second Epiſtle of St PETER.

THE

FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL

OF

S^T JOHN.

ARGUMENT.

The design of St John *in this epistle, is to secure Christians from being seduced by certain heretics, who denied that Christ was come in the flesh, and that he was the Son of God; and who lived in licentiousness. Against these St* John *establishes, in this epistle, the truth of the gospel, and the necessity of believing in Jesus Christ; of obeying him, and especially living in charity.*

CHAP. I.

I. ST *John*, to prove that the doctrine which he and the other apostles preached was the only true one, tells us, that neither he himself nor his collegues had taught any thing concerning the Son of God, but what they had seen and heard themselves, having lived with Jesus Christ; which the false teachers could not say. II. In opposition to these

these heretics, he shews in the next place, that the sum and substance of the doctrine which he preached was, that as God is light and holiness itself, none but those who walk in holiness, who sincerely confess their sins and forsake them, have any communion with God, and with Christ his Son.

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

I. THE first instruction we meet with in this chapter, relates to the truth of the gospel, which appears by the certainty of the testimony of the apostles, who preached nothing but what they had seen and heard, and their hands had handled. II. We observe here, that the design of the Christian religion is, to render men like God by holiness. This truth St *John* declares most expresly, at the very beginning of his epistle, when he tells us, that those who boast of being in communion with God and Jesus Christ, and yet remain in sin, are liars, and do not act with sincerity; and that there are none but those who to sound faith add holiness of life, that are partakers of salvation. III. He teaches, that as all men were sinners, and God had sent his Son to save them, there was no other means to partake of the mercy of God, and of the efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ, than by sincerely confessing and forsaking their sins.

CHAP. II.

THE apostle confirms in this chapter what he had advanced in the foregoing, that in order to have communion with God we must believe in Jesus Christ, and live a holy life. To this end he shews, I. That Christ has atoned for the sins of the whole world; but that none but such as keep his commandments, and live as he lived, have any share

in that atonement. II. That the chief commandment of our Lord is, to love one another; and that those who do not love their neighbour, are in darkness and in death. III. He exhorts Christians of all ages, but particularly young people, not to love the world; because the love of the world was inconsistent with the love of God and his Son Jesus Christ. IV. He advises the faithful not to suffer themselves to be seduced by impostors and antichrists, who denied that Jesus was the Christ, and the Son of God; and that they should stedfastly retain the pure doctrine, and the truth which was taught them from the beginning.

Reflections.

St *John* teaches us here, I. That our Lord has atoned for the sins of all mankind, and interceeds for us with God. This is a doctrine full of comfort for sinners; but it must be remembered, that the apostle confines the benefit of Christ's death and intercession to those that believe in him, and love him, and keep his commandments; and that he excludes those who obey him not, as hypocrites and liars. II. We are here taught, that the chief duty of Christians is to imitate their Saviour, and to live as he lived. III. That among the commandments of Christ, that which has the first place, and to which all the rest may be reduced, is the love of our neighbour; that they in whom this love is found, are in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in them; but that those who do not love their brother are in darkness, and in a state of condemnation. IV. The apostle teaches us, that the doctrine of Christ engages Christians of all ages, and all conditions, to strengthen themselves more and more in the love of God, and of Jesus Christ: That old men in their advanced age are not without motives to the discharge of this duty; and that in this young men should employ

ploy the strength and vigour of their youth. He exhorts young men in particular to renounce the love of the world; assuring them, that the love of riches, of pleasures, and of glory, is by no means consistent with the love of God. This is what young people ought most seriously to consider, in order to avoid the temptations to which their age exposes them; remembering for this purpose, that *the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof; but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.* V. The warning St *John* gives in this chapter, to beware of false teachers, that did not acknowledge Jesus for the Son of God, and for the Messiah, teaches us, that we ought never to hearken to those who spread doctrines contrary to the gospel; that faith in Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary to salvation; and that we are not in danger of falling into error, if we have the unction of the holy Spirit; if we inviolably adhere to the doctrine taught from the beginning by Christ, and by the apostles, and which is contained in the gospel: But St *John* informs us likewise at the same time, that faith in Christ engages us to live righteously and holily, that when he shall appear we may have entire confidence, and not be confounded by his presence at his coming.

CHAP. III.

IN this chapter St *John* speaks, I. Of the love which God has shewn us in adopting us for his children, and of the glory he has reserved for us. He says, II. That the hope of this glory obliges us to purify ourselves; and that the end of Christ's coming was to withdraw men from sin, and to render them righteous and holy. III. He treats particularly about the love of our neighbour; he shews how necessary that virtue is, and its nature and effects;

and he adds, that the ſureſt way to obtain peace of conſcience, and to be filled with confidence before God, is to love one another ſincerely.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter, which is one of the moſt inſtructive in the new teſtament, engages us, I. To celebrate the love of God our father, who has adopted us for his children; and to conſider well the advantages of our adoption, and the glory with which the children of God will be crowned at the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. II. The apoſtle teaches us, that thoſe who have ſuch glorious hopes muſt purify themſelves; that the deſign of Chriſt's coming into the world was to deſtroy ſin; that he that is a child of God does not ſin, that is, does not live in a habit of ſin, nor give himſelf up to ſin; but that he who ſins is a child of the devil: And that this is a ſure mark to diſtinguiſh the children of God from the children of the devil. This St *John* declares in the moſt expreſs and formal manner; warning us very ſeriouſly not to ſuffer ourſelves to be deceived in this point. III. Of all the duties of Chriſtianity, St *John* chiefly inſiſts on charity; telling us, that the love of our neighbour is the true character of Chriſtians, and that thoſe in whom this love is not found, and who hate their brother, are murderers like *Cain*, and remain in condemnation and death. IV. St *John* inſtructs us concerning the nature and effects of true charity; informing us, that it ought not only to conſiſt in words, but that it ſhould be ſincere and hearty, manifeſting itſelf by its effects, and inclining us to aſſiſt our brethren, and, if it were neceſſary, even to lay down our lives for them, as Chriſt did for us. Laſtly, The apoſtle teaches us, that by diſcharging theſe duties we ſhall be able to diſcover whether we are in the truth and in the love of God; and

that

that this is the way to have peace of conscience, and a firm assurance of obtaining from him whatsoever we ask of him.

CHAP. IV.

ST *John* warns Christians not to believe every doctrine, but to try them whether they proceed from God or not; and to assist them in the discovery, he gives them these two rules, I. First, That those who did not confess that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh, and was the Messiah, ought to be rejected as people animated with the spirit of the world, and of error, and not with the spirit of truth. II. The second is, That religion consists in charity, which the apostle proves, by representing the greatness of the love which God has shewn in giving us his Son; from whence he concludes, that those who are not animated by a spirit of charity, do not love God, nor belong to him, and consequently ought not to be heard.

Reflections.

CHRISTIANS may learn from hence, I. Not to receive all kind of doctrines, since there have always been impostors in the world; but to examine them, to know whether they come from God or not. This every Christian has a right to do, and it is his duty not to neglect it. II. That it is one of the fundamental truths of religion, to believe that Jesus is the Christ, and the Son of God, and that he was made man for our salvation. III. That charity is the sum and essence of religion, and the distinguishing badge of Christianity. This St *John* repeats several times, and establishes it upon this principle, that God is love itself, and has manifested his love to men, by sending his Son to give them life. By all this we may discover, that the love of our neighbour is a duty absolutely necessary; and that those who are

ſtrangers to it do not know God as they ought to know him, nor do any way belong to him. This St *John* declares in ſeveral places, and particularly in theſe words; *He that ſays he loves God, and hateth his brother, is a liar.* This likewiſe ſhews us, that in order to produce in us this love, we ſhould meditate upon the nature and perfections of God, who is all love; and upon that great goodneſs he has manifeſted to us, in giving us his Son to make an atonement for our ſins; ſince God has thus firſt loved us, we ought to love him moſt fervently, and to love one another: And by being more and more confirmed in the love of God and of our neighbour, we ſhall bear the image of our heavenly father, enjoy great peace and tranquillity of mind, and have confidence at the day of judgment, and at the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

CHAP. V.

I. ST *John* continues to ſhew, that the true children of God are known by the ſoundneſs of their faith, by their obedience to his commandments, and by charity. II. He teaches, that the truth of the goſpel was confirmed from heaven, by the teſtimony of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghoſt; and upon earth, by the ſpirit, by water, and by blood. From whence he concludes, that the doctrine of the goſpel, and the promiſes of eternal life, which are made us in Jeſus Chriſt, ought to be received with a full aſſurance of faith. III. St *John* ſays, that thoſe who had ſuch faith, were ſure of obtaining from God all they ſhould aſk of him according to his will, even the health and life of their brethren; unleſs thoſe for whom they prayed had committed certain ſins which God thought fit to puniſh by a temporal death. IV. The apoſtle finiſhes this epiſtle, by exhorting the faithful to keep

themſelves pure, to* continue ſtedfaſt in the faith, and to avoid idolatry, and every thing that tended to draw them into it.

REFLECTIONS.

FROM this chapter, as well as the foregoing, we may gather, I. That none are the true children of God, but thoſe who believe in his Son, who ſincerely love their neighbour, and who keep his commandments: II. That the keeping of God's commandments is not a difficult or painful thing; but that, on the contrary, by the love of God, and by faith, we may eaſily overcome the world and temptations. III. That ſince the divinity of the goſpel has been confirmed in ſo authentic a manner, in heaven and upon earth, we ſhall remain without excuſe, if we do not receive its doctrine as divine and heavenly, and if we do not obſerve the duties it preſcribes. IV. That thoſe who do the will of God, are ſure to be heard by him; and that their prayers have great efficacy, unleſs they ſhould aſk certain temporal bleſſings, which he does not think fit to grant them. This is a very valuable bleſſing, which ought moſt powerfully to excite us to obey and love God. V. St *John* tells us, that thoſe who are children of God do not ſin, that is, do not ſin as the wicked do; that ſin does not reign in them; and he adds, that the wicked one has no power over them; and that they keep themſelves pure, knowing that they belong to God; while the reſt of the world lieth in ſin and corruption. This is the duty and character of Chriſtians, and of all the true Sons of God; and this too is the only means to keep up a ſaving communion with God our Father and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, who is the true God, and life eternal; to whom be glory for ever. *Amen.*

The End of the Firſt Epiſtle of St JOHN.

THE

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST JOHN.

ARGUMENT.

St John *writes this epistle to a Christian lady, and to the church which was in her house. He exhorts her to persevere in the truth, and in charity; to shun false teachers, and to have no dealings with them.*

REFLECTIONS.

WE may observe in this epistle, for our instruction, I. The zeal and piety of that lady to whom St. *John* writes. This is an example which chiefly concerns Christian women, and which teaches them to adhere to godliness, and to cause it to reign in their families, as this lady did, whom St *John* so much commends. II. We see here, that all those who know the truth, and love it sincerely, do also love one another heartily, and join to the knowledge of the truth obedience to the commandments of God, and the practice of charity. III. St

St *John* teaches us, that it is not enough to have begun well, and entered into the way of godliness; but that we must persevere to the end, so as not to lose the fruits of what we have done, but be qualified to receive a full reward. IV. The last instruction shews what we are to do with respect to those that teach false doctrines, and who have libertine sentiments, namely, not to receive them as brethren; but to avoid their company, and any correspondence, with them, and to separate ourselves from them, and from all others, who do not live according to the precepts of the gospel.

The End of the Second Epistle of St JOHN.



THE

THE
THIRD EPISTLE
OF
St JOHN.

ARGUMENT.

This epiſtle is directed to a Chriſtian named Gaius. *St* John *praiſes the zeal which this faithful ſervant of God had for the truth, and his great charity towards the brethren. He recommends to him ſome perſons who ſtood in need of aſſiſtance. He complains of a certain man named* Diotrephes, *who was probably a biſhop; and gives a good character of* Demetrius.

REFLECTIONS.

IN this epiſtle we may obſerve, I. The tender love St *John* had for *Gaius* on account of his piety and charity, and his great joy to ſee him in ſo good a ſtate: this teaches us to love and eſteem thoſe eſpecially who fear God; and that the miniſters of the Lord do never conceive more ſincere pleaſure, nor enjoy greater comfort, than when they know

know that thoſe whom they look upon as their children do walk in the paths of truth and holineſs. II. The example of *Gaius*, who received believers and ſtrangers with ſo much heartineſs, and whoſe charity had ſo good a ſavour in the church, ſhould ſtir us up to do good to all our brethren, and particularly ſuch as are perſecuted for the goſpel, and are forced to flee from one city to another. III. What he ſays here of *Diotrephes*, who aſpired at being the chief, and even oppoſed St *John* himſelf, ſhews, that perſons who refuſe to ſubmit to order, and eſpecially ambitious miniſters, that lord it over others, occaſion great evils in the church. But on the contrary, it is a great happineſs when the miniſters are humble and pious, and ſuch as every body will ſpeak well of, as was *Demetrius*. IV. St *John* gives us a very important piece of advice in theſe words, *Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God, but he that doeth evil hath not ſeen God.* This is what diſtinguiſhes true Chriſtians from impoſtors and deceivers, and it is by this likewiſe that we ſhould examine ourſelves, and regulate our behaviour.

The End of the Third Epiſtle of St JOHN.

THE

THE

EPISTLE GENERAL

OF

St JUDE.

ARGUMENT.

I. *This epistle, as well as the second epistle of St* Peter, *which it is a kind of abridgment of, was writ against certain deceivers and profane persons, that had crept into the church, who taught damnable doctrines, and lived most licentious and irregular lives.* II. *The apostle St* Jude *proves by many examples, that God would not spare them. He gives a description of their sentiments and behaviour, saying, they were carnal men, and addicted to impurity, and every thing that was infamous; enemies of government and order, disobedient, quarrelsome, proud, boasters, and self-interested.* III. *To preserve the believers from being seduced by these profane persons, he puts them in mind of what the apostles had foretold concerning them, and exhorts them to continue in the love of God through faith and prayer; to avoid every thing that might corrupt them; and to endeavour to deliver from error those that were engaged therein; making use of meekness towards some, and of wholsome severity towards others.*

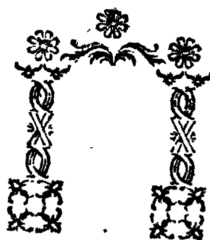
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Reflections.

I. THE caution which St *Jude* gave formerly against the profane persons of his age, is not less necessary at present, since there are such a great number of libertines, who turn religion and the grace of God into dissoluteness and impiety; wherefore every one ought to be upon his guard against such persons. II. From the description which St *Jude* gives of those profane persons, we learn, that it is a sure mark of irreligion and impiety, when men who call themselves Christians live in impurity and uncleanness, refuse to be in subjection to the higher powers, are proud and vain, and fond of independence, and make religion subservient to their interest. The apostle directs us not only to guard against the opinions and sentiments of these men, but even to avoid all intercourse with them. III. The example of the punishment which God formerly inflicted upon the rebellious angels, and upon the inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, who had given themselves up to the most infamous pollutions; and the ancient prophecy of *Enoch*, which St *Jude* mentions, do all prove, that such libertines and impious persons shall not escape the judgment of God, and that he will take severe vengeance on them; and that if they should escape in this life, they will not be secure from his vengeance in the next. IV. St *Jude* teaches us, that the way to preserve ourselves from being seduced by these profane persons, is to remember that Christ and the apostles have warned us that there would be many such in the last times; to read and meditate on the sacred writings; and to our reading and meditation to join prayer and watchfulness, as St *Jude* exhorts us in these admirable words: *But ye, beloved,*

beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Lastly, This apostle informs us, that it is not sufficient to secure ourselves from the errors of the wicked, but that charity requires, that we should endeavour to deliver others who are engaged in it; making use, to that end, either of gentleness or severity, and of all other methods that prudence and zeal may suggest to us.

The End of the Epistle of St JUDE.



THE

which ought to inſpire us with ſentiments of reverence and fear for that great God whoſe glory fills heaven and earth; and with an ardent deſire of being one day made partakers of the happineſs of the ſaints in glory. II. As it is ſaid in this chapter, that the ſaints, who were about the throne of God, did continually praiſe him day and night, and caſt themſelves down before him, worſhipping him who liveth for ever; we ſhould learn to diſcharge, even now, this duty, which will then be the everlaſting employment of the bleſſed; namely, to praiſe God, to render him our homage, and to ſay always, and with all our heart; *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are, and were created.*

CHAP. V.

THIS chapter contains, I. The viſion of the book ſealed with ſeven ſeals, which could not be opened but by the lion of the tribe of *Judah*, and by the Lamb, that is to ſay, by Chriſt. II. The ſong of the ſaints in praiſe of our Lord.

REFLECTIONS.

IT is not eaſy to determine what is the exact meaning of the viſion contained in this and the following chapters. However, as it is ſaid that no body could open this book but Jeſus Chriſt; this teaches us, that ſince he is the author of theſe propheſies addreſſed to St *John*, he knows the meaning of them, and will bring about the accompliſhment of them. We are further to obſerve, that the ſaints in glory will be employed in praiſing to all eternity Jeſus Chriſt our Redeemer, becauſe he has ſuffered death

for

for us, and redeemed us by his blood. Let us therefore bless him from henceforth for ever; let us join our thanksgivings to those of thousands of angels, and of all the glorified spirits; saying with them, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. — Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.* Amen.

CHAP. VI.

THIS chapter is a sequel of the vision of the book sealed with the seven seals, begun in the foregoing chapter. What is chiefly to be observed in it, are the complaints of the souls of the martyrs, and the answers which they received. Saint *John* describes next, the judgments of God upon the wicked, and their despair when God shall come to punish them.

REFLECTIONS.

THough the meaning of all that is said in this chapter is not perfectly known, we may, nevertheless, make these two useful reflections upon it. I. First with regard to the complaints of those who had suffered death for the sake of Jesus Christ, and the answer they received. The design of this vision was to comfort the faithful under persecution, and to teach Christians not to think it strange if God suffered his saints to be persecuted, and their blood to be shed, and did not immediately take vengeance on their persecutors: that God dealt thus with them for wise and just reasons; and that he would not fail to avenge them, when the number of their brethren should be accomplished; and that in the mean time, the souls of his saints are preserved after death, and

enjoy

enjoy reſt, in expectation of the day of their final deliverance, and of their glory. II. We have in the ſecond part of this chapter an emblem of the end of the world, and of the laſt judgment; and particularly we obſerve in it a lively deſcription of the terror and deſpair with which thoſe who perſecute the faithful, and all the other enemies of God, will be ſeized at that day; which is pathetically deſcribed in theſe words: *They hid themſelves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and ſaid to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who ſhall be able to ſtand?* Let theſe expreſſions be often preſent to our minds, that they may keep up in us a religious dread, which will be of great uſe to direct us to avoid that terrible condemnation and deſpair, which will one day be the portion of the wicked, and of all the enemies of our Lord.

CHAP. VII.

I. GOD forbids the angels of his wrath to hurt his elect. II. St *John* repreſents the happineſs and triumph of the ſaints, and particularly of thoſe that ſhall have ſuffered for the truth.

REFLECTIONS.

I. THough we do not know exactly what the firſt verſes of this chapter relate to, yet we may conclude from the command which was given to the angels, to do no harm to God's elect, who were marked with his ſeal, that God knows all his faithful ſervants, that they are very dear to him, and that he ſpares them when he viſits the inhabitants

of

of the earth with his judgments; and above all, that he will secure them from his wrath at the last day. II. This chapter represents, in a very affecting manner, the triumph and glory of the blessed, and particularly of the martyrs that shall have suffered for Christ; the joy that shall be heaped upon them after their labours, and the felicity which God reserves for them. To this purpose, St *John* tells us, that they shall be before the throne of God; and *shall serve him day and night in his temple; and that he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them; that they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more;—for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto fountains of living waters; and that God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.* This supreme, this everlasting felicity, is destined not only for martyrs, but is reserved by God for all those that shall keep themselves pure in this world, and shall glorify him by their patience and obedience. Therefore these words of St *John* ought to fill all true Christians with joy and consolation, raise in them an ardent desire and a firm expectation of that great glory, and excite them more and more to holiness and the love of God.

CHAP. XIV.

WHAT we are going to read sets before us, I. The joy and happiness of those who have been found faithful to the Lamb, and have kept themselves pure; and their thanksgivings to God when they shall see his kingdom perfectly established, and that of Satan destroyed. II. The fall of the mystical *Babylon*, the punishment of those who shall be partakers of its errors and its crimes, and the

happiness

CHAP. II. 12—29.

WE have, in this part of the second chapter, two epiſtles which Chriſt ordered to be wrote, one to the church of *Pergamos*; and the other to the church of *Thyatira*. I. He praiſes the zeal and conſtancy of thoſe of the church of *Pergamos*, and exhorts them not to ſuffer thoſe who retained the doctrine of *Balaam*, and of the *Nicolaitans*: theſe were falſe teachers, that drew away Chriſtians into idolatry and impurity, as *Balaam* of old cauſed the *Iſraelites* to fall into the ſame ſins, by the advice he gave to *Balak* king of *Moab*. II. He gives the ſame advice to the church of *Thyatira*, under the character of *Jezebel*; by whom he underſtands the ſame ſeducers, who were like *Jezebel* the wife of *Ahab*, and perhaps ſome woman who called herſelf a propheteſs. He threatens them, and thoſe that followed them, with deſtruction; and he exhorts this church to perſevere in the purity of the faith.

REFLECTIONS.

WE may make the four following reflections upon theſe two epiſtles: I. Chriſt praiſes the churches of *Pergamos* and *Thyatira*, for their ſteadineſs under perſecution, which appeared more particularly in the martyrdom of *Antipas*; as alſo for their faith and charity; and takes notice, that their laſt works exceeded their firſt. From hence we may gather, that the glory of any church before God and man, is conſtancy in affliction, perſeverance in faith, and progreſs in piety and good works. II. We ſee however that our Lord reproves theſe churches for ſuffering among them falſe prophets, who taught, that it was lawful to eat of things ſacrificed to idols; and who, by their doctrine and example, engaged

Christians in impurity, in sensuality, and idolatry. These reproaches, which Christ repeats more than once, shew, that we ought not to tolerate in the church such as corrupt the purity of faith and manners by pernicious doctrines, and particularly those that live in impurity, or entice others to it; and, that the churches which suffer these persons, and these offences, do what is very disagreeable to Christ, and draw upon themselves his indignation and wrath. III. We observe, in the epistle to the church of *Thyatira*, that God warns the false teachers, and those who were joined with them, that he gave them time to repent; but, that if they did not make a good use of his forbearance, he was going to visit them with his judgments, and make them an example. Thus does God deal with the greatest sinners: he destroys them not till he has first threatned them, and bore long with them. IV. Our Lord declares expresly here, that he will judge all those who suffer themselves to be led away by error or vice; but that he will gloriously reward those who remain stedfast in their obedience to him. This is signified in the following words, which are well worthy our consideration: *All the churches shall know, that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.—He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:—Even as I received it of my Father.*

CHAP. III.

THIS chapter contains three epistles. I. The epistle to the church of *Sardis*; which Christ reproves sharply, for having only the name and appearance of Christianity: he exhorts her to repentance; threatens her, and promises his favour to those members

members of that church who had preserved themselves undefiled. II. The second epistle is to the church of *Philadelphia:* he praises her zeal and stedfastness, and makes her particular promises of his protection. III. The third is the epistle to the church of *Laodicea:* our Lord reproves her for her lukewarmness, and for the good opinion she had of herself: he exhorts her to get out of this dangerous state, and to improve his corrections, and the invitations of his grace.

REFLECTIONS.

I. IN the church of *Sardis*, which had the appearance of life, but was really dead, and in danger of being overtaken by the judgments of God, we have the picture of several Christian churches, that have only a shew of Christianity, and are likewise threatned to be deprived of the love and protection of Jesus Christ. But as there were at *Sardis* some persons who had kept themselves pure, and whom God was pleased to spare, we ought also to believe, that in the greatest depravity and corruption, there are likewise some elect, that have kept themselves undefiled, and whom God will gloriously distinguish from wicked and false Christians; which is matter of great comfort to all those who love the Lord Jesus, and walk in innocence, in a corrupt and depraved age. II. In the epistle to the church of *Philadelphia*, we must observe, that our Lord praises her above all the churches of *Asia*, promising to distinguish her; and secure her from those evils with which the rest were threatned: which accordingly happened; this church being spared when the rest were destroyed, and subsisting even to this day, in a pretty happy condition. This is a very express instance of God's favour, and protection of those churches where piety prevails. III. The epistle to the church of *Laodicea*

teaches us, first, that lukewarmness in religion is altogether odious to the Lord; that he rejects lukewarm and half Christians, and that we cannot please him but by a sincere and fervent zeal. Secondly, That those, who being corrupted and dissolute, think they are in a good state, are in most danger; and that in order to extricate themselves from it, they should learn to know themselves well, to have a lively sense of their misery, and to seek for remedy in the grace and in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thirdly, That God, in order to bring sinners to this state of repentance, corrects them in his love, and offers them his grace with much patience and goodness, as he himself expresses it in these words: *Behold, I stand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* Let us be sensible of these invitations, which our gracious Redeemer makes us, and let us receive them with readiness and gratitude, to the end we may enjoy the blessed effects of communion with him.

CHAP. IV.

ST *John* here relates a vision, in which God appeared to him with the tokens of his majesty; and describes the praises with which the saints and angels, here represented by the four and twenty elders, and by the four beasts or living creatures, celebrate his glory and give him thanks.

REFLECTIONS.

I. WE see in the vision here related, on one hand, a representation of the glory and majesty of God; and on the other, the glory with which the saints and angels, who shall be in the presence of God for ever, will be crowned in heaven;

which

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN the Divine.

ARGUMENT.

This book is called the Apocalypse, or Revelation, because it contains the revelation which God made to St John *in the isle of* Patmos, *where he was banished by the emperor* Domitian. *The three first chapters relate to the principal churches that were then in* Asia *minor; and the following shew what was to happen in the church till the end of the world. In this book there are some places that are pretty clear; but there are likewise visions and prophesies which are obscure, and differently explained; on which we shall make no particular reflections.*

CHAP. I.

I. IN this chapter St *John* speaks of the usefulness of the prophesies contained in this book, wishes grace and peace to the seven churches of *Asia*, and foretels the coming of Jesus Christ.
II. In the next place, he relates a glorious vision,

in which our Lord appeared to him, and commanded him to write, in his name, to the ſeven churches of *Aſia.*

REFLECTIONS *after reading the chapter.*

I. THE beginning of this chapter teaches us, that the reading and meditating upon this book of the Revelation, is very profitable. Accordingly, we ought to make a good uſe of the things which it contains; and although we find in this book ſome propheſies that are hard to be underſtood, there are other paſſages in it whoſe ſenſe is clear and evident, and which are very inſtructive. II. The prayers and thanksgivings with which St *John* begins this book, expreſs the ſentiments of all true believers; who ought to beg the grace and peace of God for themſelves, and for all the churches, and to render fervent and continual thanks *unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and prieſts unto God and his father.* III. St *John's* prediction of the coming of Chriſt, ſhews, that the deſign of this book of the Revelation, is to warn men of that coming, which muſt be ſo comfortable to believers, and ſo dreadful to the wicked; and that we ought continually to meditate on this glorious coming of our Saviour. IV. In this magnificent appearance of our Lord, which is here related, we may obſerve chiefly, the majeſty of Jeſus Chriſt, and the care he takes of his church. This is ſignified in the deſcription here made of our Lord's glorious appearance to St *John*, and of the ſeven candleſticks of gold, in the midſt of which Chriſt ſtood, which repreſented the ſeven churches of *Aſia*; and the ſeven ſtars, which he held in his right hand, ſignified the angels, that is, the biſhops and paſtors of thoſe churches. This viſion, and our Lord's ex-

planation

planation of it to St *John*, teaches us, that Christ is in the midst of his church; that he governs it; that he sees every thing that passes therein; and, that its pastors are appointed by his authority. This ought to be a great inducement, not only to pastors, but to all Christians, to rely upon Christ, to serve him faithfully; as being always under his eye, who is the king, and supreme pastor of the church, and judge of all men.

CHAP. II. 1—11.

THIS part of the second chapter of the Revelation contains two epistles, which St *John* wrote by the order of Jesus Christ. I. The first is directed to the angel, that is to say, to the bishop of the church of *Ephesus*, and to all his flock. Our Lord praises the faith of that church; but reproaches them for their growing cold, and abating of their first love, and threatens to take away their candlestick, that is, to deprive them of the preaching of the gospel. II. The second letter is directed to the church of *Smyrna*. Our Lord commends her also, but foretels that she should be persecuted, and exhorts her to perseverance.

REFLECTIONS.

ON the epistles contained in this and the following chapter, we must first make these four reflections: I. That they all begin with these words, *I know thy works*; which teaches us, that the state of every church is perfectly known to Christ, and that he sees all the good and evil that is in it. II. That Christ repeats in all the epistles the following words: *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches*. This warning denotes the importance of the things which Saint *John* wrote in these epistles, by the order of our Lord, and obliges us

very seriously to attend to them. III. That at the end of each epistle, our Lord makes glorious promises to those that *overcome*, that is to say, to those that conquer temptations, and persevere to the end in faith and obedience. These promises are conveyed in figurative expressions, which denote the valuable blessings which our Lord bestows on his elect in this life, and the happiness he reserves for them in heaven. Lastly, That the threatnings which Christ denounces in these epistles against the churches of *Asia minor*, were executed afterwards, as we see even at this day, in the sad condition to which those churches, that were formerly so flourishing, are now reduced. In the two epistles addressed to the church of *Ephesus*, and of *Smyrna*, we may observe, I. That Christ commends those two churches for not suffering the wicked to remain among them; by which we learn, that our Lord would not have false teachers suffered to continue in the communion of the church, any more than the vicious and sensual, such as were the *Nicolaitans*, mentioned in the epistle to the church of *Ephesus*, who were guilty of all uncleanness. II. Christ's reproaches of the church of *Ephesus* for having forsaken her first love, and threatning to remove her candlestick if she did not repent; shews plainly, that God withdraws his protection from churches that grow careless and lukewarm, especially in respect of charity; and that he suffers them to be persecuted, and even destroyed, as it happened some time after to the church of *Ephesus*. III. We see in the epistle to the church of *Smyrna*, that God does sometimes expose Christians to persecution; but that it ought not to shake their constancy, since he does not abandon them in those trials, and has moreover promised to bestow a crown of life upon those that are faithful unto death.

CHAP.

happiness of those who die in the Lord. III. The vision of the harvest, and of the vintage.

REFLECTIONS.

I. WHAT we are to consider upon this chapter is, that St *John* said, he saw a multitude of the elect of God standing in his presence, and singing a new song before his throne; but that none could sing this song, save those who had not defiled themselves, who had followed the Lamb, and in whom no guile was to be found. This teaches us, that the happiness of the saints will be infinite, and that they shall be for ever with God; but that none can be admitted to this sovereign happiness, and to the communion of the blessed, but those who shall have kept themselves pure, and have renounced themselves, bearing their cross, and constantly following Christ their Saviour. II. We learn from hence, that the time will come, when the spiritual *Babylon* shall be destroyed, with all those that have been partakers of its idolatries and abominations; and that the punishment of the enemies of the church, of apostates, and of the wicked in general, will endure for ever and ever. III. The spirit of God declares in this chapter, that those who die in the Lord are blessed, that they rest from their labours, and that their works follow them. These assurances from the spirit of God, of the happy state of believers after death, are a great consolation to true Christians, and should stir us up to a holy life, to the end we may look upon death with confidence, and enjoy that rest and happiness which is prepared for those who live and die in the Lord.

CHAP. XX.

THIS chapter has two parts. I. In the former, St *John* foretels that Satan ſhould be bound, and that Chriſt ſhould reign with the ſaints and martyrs a thouſand years. II. In the latter he ſpeaks of the laſt judgment.

REFLECTIONS.

IN this chapter we have two very remarkable propheſies. I. The firſt is, that Satan ſhould be bound for the ſpace of a thouſand years, and that then our Lord would reign glorioſly with the martyrs and ſaints. Now, though we do not well know the whole meaning of this propheſy, yet it ſeems to imply, that there will be a time when the church ſhall enjoy reſt, and ſhall be more pure and holy than it has ever been; and that then the ſaints, and eſpecially the martyrs, ſhall be crowned with great glory. This will come to paſs when all nations are converted, and the kingdom of antichriſt deſtroyed, and the Lord ſhall reign glorioſly in his church; after which Satan ſhall be looſed, and the church ſhall undergo ſome perſecution before the end of the world. II. The ſecond propheſy relates to the laſt judgment. We ſee by what St *John* ſays of it, the majeſty in which Chriſt will appear at that day; the general reſurrection of all men; their ſtanding before the throne of our Lord, who will judge all according to their works, and the iſſue of his judgment, *viz.* that the wicked ſhall be caſt into the lake of fire, and the righteous made partakers of eternal life. Theſe great truths ought to be always preſent to our minds, and engage us to pray, and to labour continually to improve in piety, that at that day, ſo formidable to the wicked, we

we may appear before our Lord with confidence, and our names be found in the book of life.

CHAP. XXI.

I. ST *John* here describes the renovation of all things, which will be at the end of the world, the joy prepared for the righteous, and the punishments which are reserved for the wicked. II. He represents next, in figurative terms, and by magnificent images, the heavenly *Jerusalem*, the glory of God's kingdom, and the eternal happiness of the elect.

Reflections.

THE description St *John* gives of the new *Jerusalem*, teaches us, that at the end of ages, all things will be renewed, and that then the kingdom of God, and of his saints, will appear in all its glory; and we may judge by the great and splendid images, which the spirit of God makes use of in this chapter, what will be the beauty and magnificence of that glorious habitation to which the saints shall be admitted; where God will dwell with them, where he will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and where he himself will be their glory and their happiness. This ought to excite in us an ardent desire to be of the number of those that shall be received into the heavenly *Jerusalem*. And since it is written, that no polluted thing shall enter therein, and that the portion of unbelievers, of the timorous, of unclean persons, of murderers, of idolators, of liars, and of other sinners, shall be the lake burning with fire and brimstone; let us with great zeal endeavour to purify ourselves, that we may be thought worthy to be admitted into heaven to behold its beauties, and to be put in possession of that supreme beatitude,

tude, which Saint *John* in this chapter gives a description of.

CHAP. XXII.

I. ST *John* continues to describe the glory of the heavenly *Jerusalem*. II. The angel confirms to him the truth of the prophesies contained in this book, and commands him to publish them. III. Jesus Christ declares, he would come quickly to receive the saints into his glory, and to punish the wicked; and St *John* expresses how ardently the faithful desire the coming of their Saviour.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter, which is the last of the Revelation, and of all the holy writings, sets before our eyes the end and consummation of all things. We here see, how great will be the glory and happiness which the elect will eternally enjoy in the presence of God, and of Jesus Christ their Saviour; and we also learn, that none will be admitted to this happiness but those who endeavour after it, and who keep the commandments of God; but that the impure, and the wicked in general, shall be excluded from it for ever. Thus we see what will be one day the lot of good and bad men, and what God proposes to do at the end of the world. Since he has so expressly warned us of it, let us be continually meditating upon it; let us remember, that all these things are most certain, and that God revealed them to St *John*, and was pleased they should be written in this book, for the instruction and edification of the church in all ages. II. It is said in this chapter, that when St *John* was going to throw himself at the angel's feet, who talked with him, the angel said unto him, *See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and* *of*

of thy brethren the prophets: worship God. This proves that it is unlawful to worship any but God, in any manner whatever; and that, therefore, all religious worship paid to angels or saints must be very sinful.
III. It must be observed, that the angel told St *John*, that the truths contained in this book would not produce the same effect upon all; that the wicked would corrupt and defile themselves daily more and more, whilst the righteous and the saints are continually improving in holiness. This we see daily happen; but let us remember, that the Lord has forewarned us of it, and that he will at length come to judge both the righteous and the wicked, as he himself has declared at the end of this book, saying, *Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.* Let us continually pant after his coming, and while we wait for it, let us persevere in well-doing, and let us say with the bride, which is the church, and with all her true children, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.* Amen.

Here ends the New Testament.

God grant us grace to make a good use of all that we have here read and heard, to meditate upon it, and to practise it our whole lives, to the glory of God our father, and to the advancement of our own salvation.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all, Amen.

FINIS.